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A  
MEMOIR  
OF  
GENERAL JOHN COFFIN,  
COMPILED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES,  
BY HIS THIRD SON,  
CAPTAIN HENRY COFFIN, R.N.

*For the purpose of distribution amongst his  
relations and friends.*



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History

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MEMOIR  
OF  
GENERAL JOHN COFFIN.



The subject of the following memoir, General John Coffin, was the third son of Mr. Nathaniel Coffin, Cashier of Customs at Boston, Capital of the State of Massachusetts, at that time a Colony of Great Britain.

John Coffin was descended from a long line of Knights and Valiant men—for we find Sir Richard Coffin, as far back as the days of King Henry II. The most ancient seat of the name and family, called Portledge, is in the Parish of Alwington, bordering on the Severn Sea, about six leagues to the E. of the Isle of Lundy : and the Manor of Alwington has been in the family of Coffin from the time of the Norman Conquest.

We also find the following entry in Hutching's History of Dorset, Vol. 1, page 468, Parish of Wambrook. "This little village, now a distinct Parish, was anciently part of Chadstock, from which it lies about two miles N., on the very borders of the County adjoining Somersetshire. A family of the Percys were its Lords. It afterwards came to the Filiols, of Woodlands, who held it from the 3rd of Henry V. to the 19th of Henry VIII. In the 22nd of Henry VIII. on the partition of Sir William Filiol's property, this manor was assigned to Sir Edward Kymer; after this it passed to several private persons or owners. In 1645, Mr. Humphrey Coffin, Recusant, had his old rents here, and his lands, valued in 1641, at £30 per annum, sequestered.—In 1645, Mr. John Coffin's term here, valued at £45 per annum: was sequestered."

This ancient family originally came from Fallaise, in Normandy; and at a recent date, the compiler of this Memoir saw the Chateau, in which the Coffin family dwelt, and where the descendants dwell now, in 1877. They came over to England before the Norman Conquest, and settled in Somerset and Devon; and at the time of the Great Survey of all

Lands—ordered by William the Conqueror, the Coffins are mentioned in Dooms-day Book, as being possessed of several hides of land. The above, and the following extracts, are from Sir William Pole's M.S. of "Devon, and its Knights, in the Reigns of the earlier Kings of England." As a further evidence of the antiquity of this Gentle Family, there is a boundary deed, (a copy whereof is in my custody), made near the Conquest, written in the Saxon tongue, which giveth good confirmation thereof; which said deed expresseth the bounds between the lands of Richard Coffin, Lord of the Manor of Alwington, and Cokeweston, and the Abbot of Tavistock, in relation to the lands belonging to that Abbey in the near adjoining Parish of Abbotsham. Some of the terms and articles of which agreement between them are these:—that the Abbot and Convent of Tavistock should give to the said Richard Coffin, and his next heir, full fraternity in his Church of Tavistock, to receive there the habit of religion wheresoever (God so inspiring) they would, and that in the mean time he should have the privilege of one monk there. The family very early spread itself into several

branches, which flourished so well in divers places of this county, that they left their name and adjunct to them, as Combe-Coffin, now Combe-Pyne in the East part; Coffin's Well in the South part; and Coffin's Jugarly in the West part of this province; in which last place the Mansion House was near the Church, to which was belonging a fair deer park, now wholly demolished. Nor is it less observable that some of those places yielded gentlemen with gilded spurs, as Sir Jeffry Coffin, of Combe-Coffin, in the days of King Henry III. and before that, Sir Elias Coffin, of Jugarly (called also Sir Elias Coffin of Argot), in the days of King John of England. As to the family of Alwington,—one notes from the time of King Henry I. unto the age of King Edward II. (the space of above 200 years), that the heirs of this family were always called Richard; as for example—Sir Richard Coffin, of Alwington, Knight, in the reign of Henry II. Sir Richard Coffin, of Alwington, in the reign of Edward I. and Sir Richard Coffin, in the days of Henry IV.; and again—a century afterwards—Richard Coffin was High Sheriff of the County of Devon, in the 2nd year of King

Henry VIII. : his education, and accomplishments were such that they introduced him with advantage to the Court of King Henry VIII. where he came highly to be preferred, first, to the Honourable post of Master of the Horse, at the Coronation of Queen Anne Boleyn, (Mother to the glorious Queen Elizabeth), Anno 25 of that King, and after that to the honour of Knighthood in the 29th year of the same reign. He was also one of the Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber to the same King,—a place of great reputation, and trust ; whose office is to wait on the King, within doors and without, so long as his Majesty is on foot ; and when the King eats in his Privy Chamber, they wait at table, and bring in the meat ; they wait also at the reception of Ambassadors, and every night two of them lie in the King's Privy Chamber. They are forty-eight in number, all Knights, or Esquires of note, whose power is great ; for a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, by the King's command only without any written commission, is sufficient to arrest a Peer of England.

In those days gentlemen were not always called upon to fill this office because of their



political training and abilities, but more frequently from noble carriage and expertness in arms.

Of what courage this gentleman was and how expert at feats of arms may be understood from the fact that he was one of the Eighteen chosen to assist King Henry VIII. at the tournament held between him and the French King before Guisness in France, A.D. 1519.

Of these jousts Camden says,—“They were at first public exercises of arms practised by noblemen and gentlemen, but soon became more than mere sports and diversions. They were first introduced A.D. 934, and were always managed by their own particular laws. A long time and in all parts their practise was continued, to that degree of madness and with so great a slaughter of persons of the best quality, especially here in England where it was more prominently introduced by Stephen, that the Church was forced by seven canons to forbid them with the penalty, “that whosoever should happen therein to be slain should be denied Christian burial,” and under King Henry III. by the advice of parliament it was enacted that the offenders’ estate should be

forfeited and their children disinherited, yet in contempt of that good law this evil and pernicious practise long prevailed.

Sir William Coffin married Lady Mannors of Darbyshire, and residing, as it is likely, with her in those parts. He was chosen knight of that shire, in the Parliament which began An. 21 King Henry 8th, 1529 : on his way to which there happened a remarkable accident, not unworthy the relating, especially for the good law it occasioned. Passing by a Church-yard, he saw a multitude of people standing idle : he inquired into the cause thereof : they replied that they had brought a corpse thither to be buried, but the priest refused to do his office, unless they first delivered him the poor man's cow, the only quick goods he left, for a mortuary. Sir William sent for the priest, and required him to do his office to the dead. He peremptorily refused unless he had his mortuary first. Whereupon he caused the priest to be put into the poor man's grave, and earth to be thrown in upon him, and as he still persisted in his refusal, there was still more earth thrown in, until the obstinate priest was either altogether, or well nigh suffocated.

Now thus to handle a priest in those days, was a very bold adventure ; but Sir William Coffin with the favor he had at Court, and the interest he had in the house, diverted the storm ; and so lively represented the mischievous consequences of priests arbitrarily demanding of mortuaries, that the then parliament, taking it into their serious consideration, were pleased to bound that matter ever after, by a particular statute ; the preamble whereof, which runs thus, seems to intimate as much : “ Forasmuch as question, ambiguity, and doubt, is chanced and risen, upon the order, manner, and form of demanding, receiving, and claiming of Mortuaries, otherwise called Corps Presents, as well for the greatness and value of the same, which, as hath lately been taken, is thought over excessive to the poor people, and others of this realm, as also for that, &c. Be it therefore enacted &c. First. That no Mortuary shall be taken of any moveable goods, under the value of ten marks. Secondly. That no parson &c. shall take of any person that, dying, left in moveable goods clearly above his debts paid, above ten marks and under thirty pounds, above three shillings and four pence for a Mortuary, in

the whole. And for a person dying, or dead, having at the time of his death, of the value in moveable goods, of thirty pounds or above, clearly above his debts, and under the value of forty pounds, no more shall be taken for a Mortuary than six shillings and eight pence, in the whole. And for any person having at the time of his death, of the value, in moveable goods, of forty pounds or above, to any sum whatsoever it be, clearly above his debts paid, there shall be no more taken, paid, or demanded, for a mortuary, than ten shillings in the whole."

What herein is further observable, it was also enacted, that such mortuaries shall be paid, only in such a place where heretofore mortuaries have been used to be paid; and that those mortuaries be paid only in the place of the deceased person's most usual habitation; and that no parson &c. shall take more than as limited in this Act, under penalty of forfeiting every time so much in value, as they shall take above the sum limited by this Act &c. So much for the occasion of this statute; which confirms the observation, that evil manners are often the parent of good laws.

Sir William Coffin was also High Steward of the Manor and Liberties of Standon, in the County of Hertford ; which had some peculiar honor and privileges belonging to it, though I nowhere find what they were.

At his death, he humbly bequeathed to his great Master the King, Henry VIII., with whom he was in special grace and favor, his best horses, and a cast of his best hawks. And leaving no issue of his own, he conveyed the Manor of East Hagginton, in the parish of Berrynerber, with all his other Estate in the County of Devon, to his eldest Brother's Son, Richard Coffin of Portledge, Esq.

He died at Standon, aforesaid, about the year of our Lord 1538 ; and lyeth interred in that parish church, under a flat stone, on which was some-time found this inscription.

“ Here lieth William Coffin, Knight, some-  
 “ time of the Privy Chamber with his Sover-  
 “ eign Lord, King Henry VIII. ; and Master  
 “ of the Horse unto Queen Jane, the most  
 “ lawful Wife unto the aforesaid King Henry  
 “ VIII. and High Steward of all the Liberty  
 “ and Manor of Standon, in the county of  
 “ Hereford, which William deceased the 8th

"day of December, in the Year of our Lord,  
 "1538, the 30th of the reign of King Henry  
 "VIII."

This inscription is engraved in the style and spelling which prevailed at that time.

The Coffin family has been allied by inter-marriages, with the Honourable Houses of Chudleigh, Carey, Courtney, Beaumont, Prideaux, Clifford, &c. &c. and even with Royalty, having married grand-daughters and great-grand-daughters of William the Conqueror, Henry I. and Edward I.

The following account has been given to the compiler of this Memoir as the reason of the exile of this fine old family, from its native land.

In the troublesome time of the Stuarts, the members of the family devoted themselves to the cause of the people, and thus at the restoration were fated to lose all they had. On the return of Charles II. to England, Colonel Tristram Coffin of Brixton, near Kitley, county Devon, being then Governor of Plymouth, and expecting nothing but persecution from Charles, resigned the command of the citadel, embarked for America, and on his arrival in that country, settled with his family at Newbury Port.

Colonel Coffin left his only daughter in England, on the estate at Brixton to preserve the family property, and she married a Mr. Pine, who took the name of Coffin, and whose descendants hold the Portledge property to this day. All the other property was lost to the Family.

Mr. Nathaniel Coffin, the father of General John Coffin, was born in the early part of the 18th century, and received his education at Cambridge College, near Boston; where his brothers were also educated.

Mr. Nathaniel Coffin was brought up as a merchant. When about thirty years of age, he received from England the appointment of Cashier of Customs, at Boston. Being a prosperous man, Mr. Coffin soon acquired a considerable property in the town. His son John, born in Boston, 1756, was sent to sea at a very early age, and served his time in a Boston Ship; being an active young man he soon rose in the estimation of his Captain: in due time became Chief-mate, and soon after was placed in command of the ship, at the early age of eighteen. In 1774, Mr. John Coffin brought his ship to England; the following year the

Government took her up amongst others for the conveyance of troops to America, where the war had commenced. He had on board nearly a whole Regiment with General Howse (in command of the troops), who was ordered out to supersede General Gage, at Boston. The vessel arrived at Boston, on the 15th of June, Mr. Coffin landed the Regiment immediately under Bunker's Hill, and the action having already commenced (17th June, 1775), he was requested by the Colonel "to come up and see the fun;" the only weapon at hand being the tiller of his boat, he immediately (to use a nautical phrase) unshipped it, and with equal determination commenced laying about him, and shipped the powder and belt, and musket of the first man he knocked down, and bore an active part during the rest of the action. In consideration of his gallant conduct, he was presented to General Gage after the battle, and made an Ensign on the field; shortly after he was promoted to a Lieutenant, but still retained the command of his ship. Sir William Howes had promised Mr. Coffin, on his arrival at Boston, the command of 400 men, if he would go to New York and raise



them. He accordingly sailed for that city in March, 1776, when the Royalist Troops evacuated Boston, and all the Royalists left for New York and England. Among those who crossed the ocean were Mr. Nathaniel Coffin and his family. In 1776, the loyalty by which the Coffins in America distinguished themselves, having rendered them obnoxious to the Republican Government, they were compelled to return to their native land. The very serious steps taken by Mr. Nathaniel Coffin, when the British Army evacuated Boston, of leaving all his property, and attaching himself to the Government cause, not only deprived him, but all his family, of every thing they possessed. On his arrival at New York in 1776, Mr. Coffin was persuaded by Lord William Howe to proceed to England, lay his case before the British Government, and ask for remuneration or a pension sufficient for the support of himself and his family ; but after four years of incessant application, Lord North refused to give him anything. Being then *eighty* years of age, Mr. Coffin decided on returning to Boston to claim his property there, which had been sequestered by the United States Government,

hoping for that justice and compassion from his enemies, which he had sought in vain at the hands of his own countrymen in his native land. He left Bristol in May, 1781, and arrived off Sandy Hook in the middle of June, where he was attacked by gout in the stomach, and died the day before entering New York, in which city he was buried, in the Church-yard of the Church, near Astor House in Broadway. Mr. Coffin left four sons and four daughters. The eldest son, Nathaniel, was brought up to the bar, and succeeded well in his profession. He took the part of the Government at various meetings so that he was looked upon with suspicion. When the tree of liberty was planted in Frankland Square opposite his Father's house he engaged a black man to assist him to cut down the tree, which act they succeeded in performing. A thousand dollars reward was offered by the Revolutionary Government for the offender. Blackie peached, and Mr. Nathaniel was obliged to fly, or he would have been tarred and feathered, a performance he had no reluctance to talk about, but did not wish to experience. By this act he was prevented from claiming his mother's property.

Of the second son, except that he was implicated in the above mentioned act, as well as his elder brother, we have no account. The third, John, was the subject of this sketch ; and the fourth, Isaac, died an Admiral in the Royal Navy, and a Baronet, in the year 1839, at Cheltenham, 82 years of age, and his name will long be remembered in the British Navy as one of the bravest and best Officers.

The four daughters all married in England ; but singular to say that only two of the whole family left any children. Owing to the decided part Mr. Coffin's sons took in the American war, they were, at the peace of 1783, deprived of all their property, which was something considerable, having been recently valued by a person in Boston, as worth a million of dollars. Mr. John Coffin remained at New York, raised a mounted-rifle corps, called the "Orange Rangers," of which he was made Commandant, and from which he exchanged into the New York Volunteers in 1778. He took part in the battle of Long Island, in the year 1777, and also in those of Germans Town and St. Lucie 1778, in Briars Creek 1779, and Camden 1780. We have no record of his gallant bear-

ing in these actions, but of the subsequent ones we have the following authentic accounts in the "History of the American War" in the Southern States, where Captain Coffin took part in the actions of Hampton, Hobkirk's Hill, and Eutaw Springs, all of which were fought during the year 1781.

The following descriptions of the battles of Hobkirk's Hill and Eutaw Springs, are extracts from the history of the war in the Southern States of America, by General Green, in command of the American forces.

The battle of Hobkirk's Hill took place on the 25th of April, 1781.

Near the town of Camden, in South Carolina, stands Hobkirk's Hill; it is a narrow sand-ridge of very little elevation, in which are the head springs of two small branches of the River Santee, the one running into the Wateree, the other into Pine Tree Creek; the latter forms what is called Nury Branch, which winds south-eastward into the principal stream, and with it forms a continual swamp. In front of this swamp, on the south side of the town of Camden, the Royalist Troops were posted; a swelling ground formed a covert communication

from the camp into the woods that bordered these streams, and stretched round to the foot of Hobkirk's Hill. Thus the movements of the British Army were imperceptible at any point beyond their advanced redoubt, until they approached within gun shot of the American sentinels. But it was found impracticable for Lord Rawdon to pursue this route and take with him his artillery ; he believed, however, on the best grounds—intelligence from a deserter—that his adversary would in this respect be no better off than himself. The American General did not think it necessary to change the order of his line from that in which the arms had been stacked after their morning's exercise ; but bringing up the Artillery to his centre, he posted it on the road, and ordering Colonel Washington and Colonel Reid to hold themselves in reserve, calmly awaited the appearance of the enemy.

Lord Rawdon's line was composed of the 63rd Regiment on the right, the New York Volunteers in the centre, and the King's American Regiment on the left. The right was supported by the Volunteers of Ireland, and the left by a detachment under Captain

Robertson ; the Regiment posted with the Cavalry was that raised in South Carolina, so that on this bloody day the number of European troops engaged was small, as most of the British troops had been raised in America. As nearly one half of Lord Rawdon's force was posted in reserve, the front, with which he advanced was comparatively small ; that of the Americans presented their whole force, the 2nd Virginia Regiment, under General Hagar, on the right of the road, and the two Maryland Regiments, under Colonel Williams, on the left. The 1st Virginia Regiment, under Lieut.-Colonel Campbell, was on the right of the whole ; the 2nd Maryland, under Lieut.-Col. Ford on the left ; the 2nd Virginia, under Lieut.-Colonel House, and the 1st Maryland, under Colonel Gumby, formed the centre. Greene, conjecturing that the enemy was unapprised of the arrival of his Artillery, had closed the two centre Regiments upon the road, so that they were completely masked ; when these two Regiments suddenly retired to the right and left, and the Artillery began to vomit showers of grape upon the enemy, the confusion and dismay were so conspicuous, that



nothing more seemed wanting but to close upon their flanks, with the Regiments on the right and left : the orders from the American Commander were thus delivered—" Let the Cavalry make for their rear, Colonel Campbell wheel upon their left, and Colonel Ford upon their right, and the whole centre charge with trailed arms." But Green had no common adversary to deal with, in Lord Rawdon. The British supporting columns were instantly protruded ; the American wings were quickly exposed to the disadvantage which they had hoped to impose upon the enemy, they were out-flanked, their wings were enfladed, and their rear threatened, the extreme right and left were necessarily checked and deflected ; but no permanent effect could have resulted from this state of the wings, had not other occurrences produced worse results in the centre. The 1st Maryland Regiment, the 10th Legion of the Army, renowned for its former deeds, shrunk away in a panic which was not to be overcome. The first symptoms were exhibited by a firing contrary to orders ; then the fall of a favourite Officer causing a halt in those nearest to him, the check was rapidly communicated, and a

general panic ensued, which exhibited itself in a tendency to continue the retreat ; nor did the mischief end here ; Colonel Ford's Regiment, dispirited by the fall of its leader, who fell pierced by a mortal wound, faltered, and was permitted to retire.

Nothing could exceed the disappointment of the American Commander at this moment : he spurred his horse to the extreme right, and was leading on Colonel Campbell's Regiment in person, when he was called away to restore order in the centre ; but the effort was vain, and the only alternative was a retreat, during the execution of which the Artillery was exposed to imminent danger. As the British horse under Captain Coffin was ascending the hill in pursuit, Captain Smith was ordered to secure the Artillery at all hazards, and as the men appeared to be giving way, Greene galloped up alone, and dismounting, held his horse with one hand, while he seized the drag-ropes of the guns with the other. Smith's men now joined in the effort of dragging off the guns. When Coffin's corps appeared on the hill moving to the charge, Smith's little band poured a volley into his ranks with such good aim that they fled ; again



and again did Coffin return to the charge, and was foiled as before. At length the British Infantry joined in the pursuit; Smith's men fell fast, he was himself badly wounded; Coffin succeeded in forcing them, and every man was either killed or taken. At this crisis Washington charged the British and they fled. As soon as General Greene found his Artillery, ammunition, wagons, &c., safe, he issued orders to continue the retreat. Coffin with his Cavalry and some Infantry were left on the field. On seeing this, Colonel Washington retiring with his Cavalry into a thicket, sent forward a few of his men who came within a short distance of the enemy. Captain Coffin's horse, with the Infantry, immediately pursued them as far as the wood. Washington emerged from his hiding place, cut to pieces and dispersed the whole party. The Americans thus remained masters of the field.

The memorable battle of Eutaw Springs was fought on the 8th of September, 1781.

The day was intensely hot; at four o'clock in the morning, the American Army moved from its bivouac. Their Cavalry amounted to about 200 men; the British had not above half the number, but they were commanded by an able officer, Captain Coffin.

On the evening of the 7th, it is an admitted fact, that General Stewart, the British Commander, was unapprized of the approach of the American Army, and so entirely secure did he feel in his position, that an unarmed party under a small escort had been sent up the river, for the purpose of collecting the sweet potatoe. This party, commonly called a "rooting party," had advanced about three miles, and then turned towards the plantations on the river.

The first intelligence that Greene had approached within seven miles of his position, was communicated to Stewart by two of the North Carolina conscripts, who had deserted during the night. Captain Coffin was sent on to re-call the "rooting party," and to reconnoitre the American position. The American advance had already passed the road, when they were met by Captain Coffin, who immediately charged them with a confidence which betrayed his ignorance of its strength, and of the near approach of the main army. It required little effort to repulse the British Cavalry, but the probability that their main army was near at hand forbad a pursuit.

The firing at this point drew the attention of

the rooting party out of the woods, and the whole fell into the hands of the enemy.

In the meantime Colonel Stewart had pushed forward a detachment of Infantry to a mile distant from the Eutaws, with orders to engage the American troops, while he formed up his men and prepared for battle. But Greene persuaded by the audacity of Coffin that the enemy was at hand, and wishing to have time for his raw troops to form with coolness, halted his columns.

At about 200 yards west of the Eutaw Springs, Stewart had drawn up his troops in one line; the Eutaw Creek effectually covered his right, and his left, which was in military language "in air," was supported by Coffin's Cavalry, and a respectable detachment of Infantry held in reserve, at a convenient distance in the rear of the left under cover of the wood. The ground on which the British Army was drawn up was altogether in wood, but at a small distance in the rear of this line was a cleared field, extending west, south, and east from the dwelling house, and bounded by the creek formed by the Eutaw Springs, on the shores of which is a high bank, thickly covered with low wood.

The house was of brick, and strong enough to resist small arms, and surrounded with various offices of wood, one particularly, a barn of some size. In the open ground to the South and West was the British encampment, the tents of which were left standing.

The superiority of his enemy in cavalry made it necessary that Colonel Stewart should cast his eye on the Eutaw house for retreat and support. To that, therefore, he directed the attention of Major Sheridan, with orders on the first symptoms of misfortune to throw himself into it, and cover the army from the upper windows.

On the right in the thickets which border the creek, Major Majoribanks, with 300 of his best troops was posted, with instructions from the Royalist Guard to watch the flank of the enemy. As soon as the skirmishing parties were cleared away, a steady and desperate conflict ensued, which between the Artillery was bloody and obstinate in the extreme. The Militia behaved with wonderful gallantry and perseverance. From the first commencement of the action, the Infantry of the American covering parties on the right and left had been steadily engaged

The Cavalry of the Legion by being on the American right, had been enabled to withdraw into the woods, and attend to its Infantry, without being exposed to the enemy's fire. In the meantime important changes were taking place along the front ; the North Carolina Brigade yielded and fell back ; the British left, elated at this, sprang forward and their line became deranged. This was the moment for which the American Commander had been waiting. Two Brigades received the order to advance with a shout, and anxious to wipe away the recollection of Hobkirk's Hill, rushed forward with trailed arms. Upon their approach, the British left commenced a retrograde movement in some disorder, but their centre and right still maintained an unbroken front, awaiting the impending charge with unshaken firmness ; no troops ever came nearer. The left of the British centre appears to have been pressed upon and forced back by their own fugitives, and began to give way from left to right, at that moment the Marylanders delivered their fire, the enemy yielded along their whole front, and shouts of victory resounded through the American lines. Why the American Cavalry did not now act

has not been explained, we can only conjecture that it was prevented by one or both of two causes known to have existed on that day. Colonel Lee was generally absent from it during the action, bestowing his attention upon the progress of his Infantry, and Captain Coffin was in that quarter attending on the retreat of the British left. Coffin's force was probably superior to that of Lee in Cavalry ; whether so superior as to justify the latter in not attempting the charge, could only have been decided by the attempt itself.

At this stage of the battle, Majoribanks still stood firm in the thickets that covered him. General Greene soon saw that he must be dislodged, or the Maryland flank would soon be exposed to his fire, and the conflict renewed in that quarter. Therefore orders were dispatched to Washington, to pass the American left, and charge the enemy's right. The order was promptly obeyed, and galloping through the wood, Washington was soon in action. Had he taken Kirkwood's infantry behind his men, all would have gone well. Colonel Hampton at the same time received orders to co-operate with Colonel Washington, and the rapid move-

ment which he made in order to fall in upon Washington's left probably hastened the forward movement of the latter, who, before Hampton had joined him, attempted a charge, but it was impossible for his cavalry to penetrate the thicket. He then discovered that there was an interval between the British right and the creek, by which he was in hopes to succeed in gaining their rear. With this view he ordered his troop to wheel by sections to the left, and thus brought nearly all his officers next to the enemy, whilst he attempted to pass their front. A deadly and well-directed fire, delivered at that instant, wounded or brought to the ground many of his men and horses, and every officer except two. The field of battle was, at this instant, covered with wounded or dying; on the left Washington's cavalry routed and flying, in the foreground Hampton covering the scattered cavalry, while Kirkwood with his bayonets rushed forward to revenge their fall; beyond these, the whole American line advancing rapidly and in order. Nothing could exceed the consternation spread through the British ground of encampment. Everything was given up for lost, the com-

panies destroyed their stores, and the numerous retainers of the army took flight, and spread alarm to the very gates of Charleston. By this time Sheridan with some of the routed companies had thrown himself into the house from which they could direct their fire with security. The whole British line was now flying before the American bayonet. The retreat lay directly through their encampment where the tents were all standing ; here the American line got into irretrievable confusion.

When the American officers had made their way through the encampment, they found themselves abandoned by nearly all their soldiers, and the sole marks for the party who now poured their fire from the windows of the house, where more of the British fugitives had collected.

Majoribanks and Coffin, watchful of every advantage, now made simultaneous movements, the former from his thicket on the left, and the latter from the wood on the right of the American line. General Greene soon perceived the evil that threatened him, and not doubting that his infantry (whose disorderly conduct he was not yet made acquainted with) would imme-



diately dispose of Majoribanks, despatched Captain Pendleton with orders for the Legion of Cavalry to fall upon Coffin and repulse him.

We give the result in Captain Pendleton's own language,—“ When Coffin's Cavalry came out, General Greene sent me to Colonel Lee with orders to attack them. When I arrived, Lee was not there, and the order was given to the next in command, who made the attack without success.” By this time General Greene having ordered a retreat, Coffin, who certainly proved himself a brave and active officer on this day, had no sooner repulsed the Legion of Cavalry, then he hastened on to charge the rear of the Americans now dispersed among the tents.

Colonel Hampton had been ordered up to the road to cover the retreat, at the same time that the order was issued to effect it, and he now charged upon Coffin with a vigour that was not to be resisted. Coffin met him with firmness, and a hand to hand conflict was for a while maintained.

But Coffin was obliged to retire, and in the ardour of pursuit, the American Cavalry approached so near Majoribanks and the picketed

garden, as to receive from them a fatally destructive fire.

Colonel Polk, who commanded Hampton's left, and was, in consequence directly under its influence, describes it by remarking, that "he thought every man killed but himself." Colonel Hampton then rallied his scattered Cavalry, and resumed his station on the border of the wood. But before this could be effected, Majoribanks had taken advantage of the opening made by his fire to perform another gallant action, which was decisive of the fortune of the day. The Artillery of the second line had followed on as rapidly as it could, the pieces had scarcely opened their fire, when all the discharges from the house being directed upon the guns, very soon killed or disabled nearly the whole of the men. Majoribanks was no sooner disembarassed of Hampton's Cavalry, than he sallied into the field, seized the pieces and hurried them under the cover of the house. General Greene halted on the ground only long enough to collect his wounded, and leaving a strong picket under Colonel Hampton, he withdrew his army to Burdels, seven miles distant, as at no nearer point could water be found.

Both parties claimed a complete victory but there is no difficulty in deciding the question. The British were chased from the field at the point of the bayonet, and took refuge in a fortress. But the best criterion of victory is to be found in consequences, and here the evidence is altogether on the American side; the enemy abandoned his position, and the Americans advanced within five miles of him, to Ferguson's swamp, where he first halted. General Greene in his official communication distinguishes particularly the Virginians, Marylanders, Infantry of the Legion, and Kirkwood's light Infantry. Every corps indeed is mentioned with applause, except the Cavalry of the Legion, of which it was only said: it was discomfited in an attempt on the right. The failure of the charge upon Coffin had passed under the eye of the whole army, and although his superiority in numbers may have been great at the commencement of the action, it must have been much diminished towards the close, after the combats and fatigues it had undergone. Captain Coffin received a handsome sword from Lord Cornwallis, with a letter in which the rank of Major

was conferred upon him in acknowledgment of his valuable services on many occasions, but especially for having so greatly distinguished himself on this day. In many subsequent affairs, Coffin's Cavalry were found very efficient, and always were ready for any bold or brave deed.

Captain Coffin was engaged in many other combats, among which may be mentioned that near St. Thomas' Muster House, and another on the Cooper river. The following taken from the same source as the preceding extracts will give a general idea of these engagements.

Very soon after General Greene had taken post at Round O. and extended his parties to the southward and eastward, General Leslie began to feel the effect of being straitened in the extent of his foraging ground. One consequence of drawing in his detachments, and collecting the refugees, was a very great accumulation of horses within his lines. Strong parties were kept on the alert by the enemy, to seize opportunities for collecting provision from the surrounding country, and posts were established at Haddrall's and Hobcaw's to facilitate the movements of these parties. When

the alarm was excited in the American camp, on the rumoured approach of strong re-enforcements, Marion was ordered to repair to head quarters, with all the force he could draw after him. The command was promptly obeyed, but a detachment of mounted infantry was left to watch the motions of the enemy in the neighbourhood of Monk's Corner. For the purpose of destroying this party, and taking advantage of the absence of Marion, a detachment of about 350 men, cavalry and infantry, were transported from Charlestown, by water, to the north bank of the Wands river. But the sudden return of Marion, in a great measure disappointed the success of the enemy's enterprise. Marion's force scarcely equalled that of the enemy, but he resolved to advance for the purpose of attacking them. In order therefore to detain them, while he advanced with his main body, he dispatched to Colonel Richardson, and Scriven, and a part of Mayhem's horse, with orders to throw themselves in front of the enemy, and engage them until he could come up. The order was gallantly executed, and upon the appearance of the enemy's advance, near St. Thomas' Muster House, they

were charged by Captain Smith of Mayhem's Cavalry, and their leader, Captain Campbell, and several others killed in the pursuit. But the pursuit was urged too far, and the pursuers were charged and dispersed by Captain Coffin, at the head of his cavalry. This event left Marion too weak to hazard an attack, and the enemy were content to pursue their march, without attempting to force him to it. He retired to Wambaw, and they marched up to Gumby Bridge, and having gathered some stock, retired across Wappataw to Haddrell's Point.

A detachment of 200 horse, 500 infantry, and 2 pieces of Artillery, under the celebrated Count Rumford, then Col. Thompson, had moved up the Cooper river, obviously with designs upon Horry. Marion, placing himself at the head of Mayhem's regiment, (who was absent), fell in with the enemy most unexpectedly. Marion had ordered a halt, for the purpose of refreshing men and horses, and when the latter were unbitted and feeding, the whole of the enemy's cavalry made their appearance. It would seem that the British Commander was no less surprised than Marion, he not

only halted but exhibited alarm, though his numbers were double those of Marion. The American Cavalry at that time felt a proud confidence in themselves, and advanced with a firm and promising countenance. But the swelling hopes of Marion were destined to be blighted by an untoward event. The front section was led by an Officer of approved courage, who had before distinguished himself, yet, now he dashed into the woods on the right, and drew after him the whole regiment in irretrievable confusion. Many of the men had to quit their horses, and disembaras themselves of swords and boots, to pass a deep creek which lay on their right. Fortunately few were either killed or taken, for such was the alarm in the hostile ranks, that it was some time before they knew, not only that they were safe, but that they had gained a bloodless victory. Unfortunately too, Horry's brigade had been also wholly dispersed. Horry labouring under severe indisposition had left the command to Colonel Mc'Donald, and retired across the Lantee River. By some unaccountable neglect of the patrols, videttes or pickets, Coffin, with the Cavalry of the enemy's detachment, had

stolen upon them unexpectedly, and the whole retreated precipitately. Many crossed the river by swimming, and some were drowned. A considerable party under command of Captain James, took down the river road, and by lifting the Wambaw bridge, arrested the progress of the enemy and rallied at a short distance. The enemy made no prisoners, for they gave no quarter, the number of the slain was by no means equal to what might have been anticipated, for the thickets saved the infantry, and the British cavalry had been too long pent up in Charlestown to be in the highest order. Thus was Marion's force for the present annihilated.

From that period to the close of the American war, the name of Major Coffin is found mixed up with others, in the most desperate encounters, and ever coming off victorious, even by unwilling evidence from the enemy's ranks. Unfortunately, no true history exists of a struggle so little redounding to the credit of the British Army, consequently individual valour and high souled courage had little chance of being chronicled. Consul Anderson (American Consul at Tripoli 1821), gave the author



a graphic description of one of Captain Coffin's forays whilst he was with Lord Cornwallis. He said, "whilst Coffin was attached to Cornwallis, he was able to be of great service to that General, but the bravery, not to say the extraordinary sagacity mingled with audacity of one man could not save the army. Lord Cornwallis' army, coupé up by the Americans, was in danger of starvation, and Coffin stood almost alone in his successful forays. In these forays he frequently eluded the whole American Army, and returned laden with the fruits of his success. In one of these excursions he met with an adventure which is too good to be left unrecorded. On one occasion he accidentally came to the house of a wealthy planter whose daughter was to be married that day. He quietly surrounded the house with his troops, and knocking at the door, sent in word that he wished to speak with the proprietor. On presenting himself the gentleman was courteously made aware of his condition. He was told not to make a noise, but to order sufficient turkeys, hams, wine and other provisions to be put up to satisfy the men ; if this was done no harm would happen, but on the contrary if any

resistance was attempted, everything and everybody within the house would be destroyed. Coffin's character and resolution were well known, so the planter thought it best graciously to comply with the mandate. A large quantity of provisions was thus secured. Captain Coffin supped with the wedding party, danced with the bride, and left in safety, taking care that no alarm should be given, and reached Cornwallis without accident by daybreak." When from adverse circumstances, the British Army retired towards Charlestown, Lord Cornwallis having capitulated, Coffin was determined not to be taken by the Americans, who had offered 10,000 dollars for his head, so he cut his way through their troops to Charlestown. In this town he was well acquainted with a family of the name of Matthews, whom he used to visit. Even when the enemy held Charlestown, during which time he ran very great risks of being taken prisoner, he went to see Miss Ann Matthews, daughter of William Matthews, Esq., of St. John's Island, Charlestown, to whom he was eventually married in the year 1781. On the occasion of one visit, the house was searched for him by authority, and the gallant soldier

took refuge under Miss Matthew's ample dress. At that time ladies wore hoops, and they must have been of considerable size, when Major Coffin, who stood six feet two, and was proportionably stout, lay successfully concealed under one. When Charlestown was evacuated, Major Coffin made his way up to New York, crossed the Hudson, and although the Revolutionists were in hot pursuit, he arrived in safety, to the astonishment of the whole British Army, having successfully eluded the vigilance of numerous parties on his track determined to spare no pains to capture him. Although he closed his brilliant military career, as far as active service went, at the early age of *twenty-seven*, full of honour and glory, Lord Cornwallis himself having cordially expressed his great admiration for so distinguished an officer, still Major Coffin was not promoted as he *ought* to have been, at the Peace, to a Lieutenant Colonel; it was said that he gave a great offence to George III. by exposing the cowardice of a natural son of his, during one of the Cavalry engagements. Lord William Howe, Lord Cornwallis, Lord Rawdon, and the Marquis of Hastings exerted themselves to overcome the obstinacy of the King, but all to no purpose.

This gallant young officer and his brave men, were so much feared and disliked by the Americans, that Major Coffin was sent, as a matter of expediency, down to the British Province of New Brunswick. Government giving them leave to settle there, they arrived in October 1783, when there were only two persons, traders in furs, in or near the Harbour of St. John's, in the province. Mr. Symonds and Mr. White kindly supplied the new comers with provisions, and they immediately commenced clearing and felling the timber. The severity of the weather rendered it highly necessary they should build their log huts as expeditiously as possible ; but with all that industry and perseverance could achieve, they suffered direful hardships this first winter, particularly Mrs. Coffin, who had been delicately nurtured in a wealthy family, and a soft climate.

The country surrounding the commodious harbour of St. John's was then an uncultivated, bleak, and almost uninhabited waste, and the young adventurer's first mishap, and a great one too considering all circumstances, was the loss of his boots, in crossing a bit of a swamp,

now the market place of a thriving town, containing thirty thousand inhabitants. But despondency had no place in Major Coffin's heart, and having selected some lots of ground about the harbour, he proceeded energetically to explore the interior of the country or province. An ascent of about twelve miles up the river St. John, opened out a rich and lovely landscape,—hill and dale, magnificent woods, fine rivers, and lakes swarming with innumerable salmon, bass, schad, and myriads of smaller fish, promised everything to willing hands and stout hearts.

In this fine and fertile locality, Major Coffin purchased, for a trifle, a tract of land from Colonel Grazier, to whom it had been granted by Government, and which became a very valuable property twenty years after. Four men were despatched up there to build a house during the winter, and in May, 1784, he and Mrs. Coffin, with their two children and household, composed of three black men and one black woman, brought from Charlestown, took possession of their new residence, and called it Alwington Manor, after the family estate in Devonshire, which belonged to them in the

time of William the Conqueror. Two of the men and the woman proved good and faithful servants, and when the slaves were emancipated, they still remained with the family, till they could no longer work for it, and were then well cared for.

It was never intended that Major Coffin should do more than settle his gallant countrymen, and then return to England. He had several offers of appointments as Aide-de-camp to those General Officers who knew his worth, but steadily refused any, unless it were preceded by his promotion, which he had so bravely earned, and had every right to expect.

Major Coffin's energy and activity produced a rapid change; he was never conquered by any difficulty; a man of iron will, he had determined to make a prosperous colony out of a wilderness, and it pleased God to bless his efforts and allow him to do so. The province began to settle fast; Major Coffin was generous and kind, extending a helping hand to all. Saw and flour mills were erected, water conducted through dense woods, and over high banks, for miles; reservoirs were formed, and mill dams constructed, all at an enormous outlay, owing to the scarcity of labour.

Clearings along the beautiful banks of the river, soon showed comfortable farms, with houses built on them, and stock furnished, without any return being required by the generous and noble minded landlord for three years ; and generally, the provisions necessary for the subsistence of these novices in forest life were provided by the Major, from his own farm, during their first winter, that long, dreary, pinching season to a new settler.

Farming stock was imported from England and the United States, and often great losses were incurred. Major Coffin also imported implements of husbandry, with all the latest improvements, and distributed them among his tenants, and by his great and incessant exertions, he was able to add somewhat to the scantier stores of those who had been less successful than he had, for his benevolence and liberality knew no limits ; and long will his name be honoured and blessed by the descendants of those early settlers.

Barrels of flour, Indian meal, salted salmon, loaves of sugar, coffee, tea, &c., &c., in considerable quantities, as well as the productions of the farm, were among his most welcome gifts.

Subsequently, Major Coffin was appointed superintendent of Indian affairs, and though he succeeded in gaining the affection of this singular and extraordinary people, in as extraordinary a manner, still his unceasing efforts to civilize and educate them, met with no adequate success. On numerous occasions, Major Coffin's foresight and determination of character were called into play, not only by the wily and treacherous Indian, but also by the grisly denizens of those illimitable forests, that, hitherto unchecked, had roamed the vast wilderness and untrodden wilds, monarchs of all they surveyed. One anecdote is well authenticated by his youngest daughter, whom he took with him, when a child of six or eight years old, in a small whale boat, down to the town of St. John's. The morning was lovely, and a westerly wind stirred the surface of the noble stream sufficiently to render the services of one boatman only necessary. They had scarcely reached the opposite banks, when they descried an enormous bear chasing some cattle on the side of the hill. As there was a man following him at some distance, the huge beast took to the water, when Major Coffin, delighting in these bold encounters, im-



mediately attacked him with the boom of the sail, which, being made of light pine wood, was soon shivered in a dozen pieces by contact with the iron head of the huge monster ; he then took one of the oars, and desired the child to steer against the boatman's remaining oar. During the conflict, which had occupied an hour and a half, they had drifted upwards of a mile down the river ; assistance became necessary, for at one time the bear had his fore paws and half his body inside the boat. A ready thrust in the mouth, threw him back into the river, but he instantly rallied, and made an attack on the child, passing his hideous paw over the seat, from which the boatman had removed her not a minute before. Seeing her father's strength failing, for his blows became slower and not so well directed, she disobeyed his positive orders, and shrieked for help, with all the strength which an agony of terror supplied ; instantly a well manned skiff, rowed by some of the tenants' sons, who delighted in these wild frays, shot out from the opposite bank, and, almost flying over the water, dashed up to the scene of action, just as the well battered head of the now beaten foe, sank beneath the surface

of the stream. The Colonel thanked the lads for their good intentions, and desired them to take the bear back to the Manor House, while he went on to the town, as quietly as if no such interlude had taken place. Like many other incidents of a similar nature, he never named it.

Settlers soon flocked into the province. Ten years residence, with Major Coffin's activity aided by his willing men, had made it a respectable and desirable settlement. He was made a Magistrate of the county which was called the King's county, and in due time a Member of the Provincial Parliament and of the Legislative Council, which offices he filled very efficiently, till within a few years of his death. Many minor situations he also held, with credit to himself and much benefit to others.

Though the province improved, the difficulty of obtaining labour was great, the war in Europe eventually taking every available man, the only labourers were the settlers and their sons, and occasionally an emigrant from the United States. Many Royalists came down from Massachusetts and other parts of the United States, and settled in various parts of the province, the Winslows, Saunders, Hazons, Chipmans, &c. &c.

Although not a resident, General Coffin was on good terms with the inhabitants of the neighbouring State, for we find that General Coffin having presented a very valuable Entire Horse for the purpose of improving the breed in that State, a handsome Gold Medal was awarded to him, bearing the following inscription :

“Extract from the Records of the Trustees of  
 “the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, January 23rd, 1821. Voted, that the M. S.  
 “for P. A. receive with great sensibility the generous  
 “donation made to the Society by the Honourable  
 “John Coffin, General in the British Service, of a  
 “fine Stud Horse of the light cart breed, and that  
 “they will use their best exertions to render the  
 “said donation beneficial to the Commonwealth,  
 “the native State of General Coffin, also that a  
 “Medal be presented to him, and that he be  
 “admitted an Honorary Member of the Society for  
 “Life.”

In the end of June, 1794, His Royal Highness, the Duke of Kent, who was Governor of Nova Scotia, came to pay an official visit to the province, in a barge pulled by the crew of the ship, which was commanded by H. R. H. the Duke of Clarence, his brother, who accompanied him. They stopped at Alwington Manor, and



honoured Major and Mrs. Coffin with their company, at the same time graciously permitting one of their younger children, a boy, born a few days previously, to be named Henry Edward, after them. The position of Major Coffin, and his unfair treatment, were pointed out to their Royal Highnesses, by Captain Smith, their Aide-de-Camp, but they could do nothing for their ill-used host, as things went on in their usual way at home (*i.e.* England) at that time ; but in 1804 a strong application was made by Mr. Barwell, who had married the youngest sister of Major Coffin, to the Prince of Wales, whom he had often entertained at his magnificent seat, Stansted Park, Sussex, for the promotion of his brother-in-law ; in this he was assisted by the Marquis of Hastings, Lord Rawdon, the Earl of Kingston, Lord Dorchester, many other old and influential friends, and also his younger brother, Rear Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin, of the Royal Navy, himself a very brave and distinguished officer, and much thought of, in England. After much time and trouble had been expended, these kind and zealous friends at last succeeded in getting him advanced to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel :

he was immediately ordered to England, to be presented to His Majesty George the III., who had been so long his enemy. Colonel Coffin sailed for Scotland in the month of December, and arrived in January, 1805, where he was greeted by many of his old companions in arms, by whose side he had fought during the American war; they received him most hospitably, passing him on from one to another, recollecting and recounting many a tale of his gallant deeds, and chivalrous bearing to all. In May, 1805, Colonel Coffin left Scotland for London, where he was kindly received by the Commander-in-Chief, at the Horse Guards, and presented to His Majesty George the III. at a levee, who was much pleased with his appearance and manner, for he looked and bore himself, like the hero he was; being six feet two inches high, with a handsome face, fine figure, gentle and polite in manner, and possessed of a reputation for *brave* and *good* deeds that challenged the admiration of all ranks, and made him respected and loved by his friends.

Colonel Coffin was immediately offered the command of a Regiment, but this he declined, as, from the circumstance of his promotion

being so long withheld, he would have had to serve under officers, when in the field, much younger than himself, but who had been more fortunate in their promotion, for he ought, at that time, to have been a Major General. Having so large a stake in the province of New Brunswick, Colonel Coffin returned to his adopted country in August, 1805, where he continued his career of active usefulness, his hand, heart, and purse being open to all applications for assistance. In addition to being a member of the Legislative Council, member of the Provincial Parliament, he became Chairman of the Quarter Sessions of King's County, Commissioner for the Indians, &c., &c.

The growing prosperity of the province enabled the Colonel to keep his head above water, but even that, at times, was hard work, with a young and constantly increasing family to provide for, and both provisions and clothing scarce and dear ; however, in some things he was very much benefited, for stock and corn sold well. In 1810, the United States put an embargo on all produce being shipped to England, or any of her colonies, which caused a rise in the price of all food. In the year 1811,

it was evident that the United States intended to go to war with England, and that the colonists would be obliged to protect themselves. Colonel Coffin then offered the Government to raise a Regiment which he was to command, and that it should be a local corps. In 1812, he commenced raising the Regiment, and soon got together 400 men, a timely assistance, which placed the 104th Regiment at the disposal of Government to send to Canada, where the inhabitants of both the upper and lower provinces were hard pressed by the invasion of the United States Troops ; and by the year 1813, he had raised a Regiment of 600 fine young men, born in the province of New Brunswick, the parents of whom were almost all known to their kind and gallant Commander. At the peace of 1815, the Colonel was promoted to the rank of Major General, and had he received his promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel as was his right, at the peace in 1783, he would, in 1815, have been high up in the list of General Officers. His fine Regiment called the "New Brunswick Fencibles," was disbanded when peace was proclaimed, and in 1816, General Coffin returned once more to

half-pay. He made frequent visits to England, and in 1817, Mrs. Coffin and all the family left New Brunswick to reside in England, the family of Coffin having been absent from their country during 172 years. General Coffin returned to New Brunswick every Spring, to superintend his large landed property there: his last visit to England took place in the year 1829. In 1832, his second son, Captain John Townsend Coffin, of the Royal Navy, went out to reside near his father, and in 1838, on the 12th May, it pleased God to remove this great and good man to a better and a happier world, and at last to give him rest from his weary labours, and many disappointments.

He was an exemplary character, both in public and private life. Had he lived and thus acted in these times, and in his native land, he would have gone to the grave with more honours, though he could scarcely have been more respected, beloved, and regretted. As it was, he was too far out of sight, and so his services were not duly appreciated, nor sufficiently rewarded. General and Mrs. Coffin had a large family, but out of ten children only eight lived



to grow up. The eldest son, General Guy Carleton Coffin, died in April, 1856, at the age of seventy-three, a General Officer of the Royal Artillery. The second and third sons are in 1860 still living; the second, an Admiral; the third, Captain in the Royal Navy; five daughters, of whom there are three now living, all married well, and had families, so that General and Mrs. Coffin had the satisfaction of seeing all their children who had lived to grow up, comfortably settled in life.

*Extract from a New Brunswick Newspaper  
of May, 1838.*

“Died, on Saturday, the 12th instant, at his residence in King’s County, General JOHN COFFIN, aged 82 years, being born in the year 1756.

“General Coffin commenced his Military career as a Volunteer at the battle ofunker’s Hill,—soon rose to the rank of Captain in the Orange Rangers, from which he exchanged into the New York Volunteers, and with that corps went to Georgia in 1778. At the battle of Savannah, at that ofHobkirk’s Hill, under Lord Rawdon, at the action of Cross Creek, near Charlestown, and on

“ various other occasions, he conducted himself  
 “ in the most gallant manner. On the 8th  
 “ September, 1781, the battle of Eutaw was  
 “ commenced by Brevet Major Coffin, who  
 “ highly distinguished himself, and to such an  
 “ extent as to draw forth the admiration of the  
 “ American General Greene, in his despatches  
 “ to Congress. The following General Order  
 “ dated New York, 28th August, 1782, was  
 “ for those various services issued :—

“ Sir Guy Carleton, Commander-in-chief.

“ Brevet Major John Coffin, of the New  
 “ York Volunteers, having repeatedly received  
 “ the public thanks of the principal officers  
 “ under whose command he has served, and on  
 “ the 8th September, 1781, being only twenty-  
 “ five years of age, having distinguished him-  
 “ self very particularly, is for those services  
 “ appointed Major of the King's American  
 “ Regiment, vacant by the death of Major  
 “ Grant.

“ At the peace of 1783, Major Coffin re-  
 “ tired with his family to this Province, where  
 “ he has resided ever since, and where he filled  
 “ the situations of Representative to the House  
 “ of Assembly, for King's—a Member of Coun-

“cil, and Chief Magistrate of King’s County,  
 “for many years. During the last American  
 “War, he raised a Regiment, which was dis-  
 “banded again in 1815.

“By nature and habit industrious, and  
 “possessing talents of great extent for public  
 “business, his life has been of much advantage  
 “to those around him, who have long been in  
 “the habit of consulting him on their various  
 “affairs, and the poor have ever found him a  
 “kind though unostentatious friend.

“He has left a wife and large family to la-  
 “ment his departure, though his advanced  
 “period of life must have long prepared them  
 “for such an event.

“Funeral from the residence of his son,  
 Vice-Admiral Coffin, on Thursday morning,  
 at ten o’clock.

*Note respecting the descent of the Coffins, of Portledge.*

Coffin, Knt., of Portledge, in Alwington, in the North of  
 Devon, resided there on or before the Norman Conquest.—  
*Vide Prince*, 1066.

Arms: Azure, three bezants between five cross-crosslets, Or.

They were royally descended and related to Henry 1st,  
 by marrying a daughter of Chudleigh, Knt., who twice  
 married daughters of Beaumont Lord Viscount Main (in  
 Normandy), who resided at Fowlstone, in Shoswell, near

Barnstaple ; which Rosilia, Lord Main, married Constance, the natural daughter of Henry 1st.

Also, by marrying a Chudleigh, who married with the Pomeroy's twice, who were Lords Biry, of Biry Castle, near Totness. Joel Pomery married also a natural daughter of King Henry 1st, sister to Reginald, Duke of Cornwall, who come in with the Conqueror.

Also, by the Chudleighs, who married a Champernone, of Lanet House, Mortbury, who married Joan, a natural daughter of Richard, King of the Romans, youngest son of John, King of England.

Also, by the Prideaux, of Sauldon, Knt., who married with Lord Clifford's family, who married with the Courtneys, Earl of Devon (descended from Louis le Gros, King of France), who married a daughter of Averanche's, who married a niece of the Conquerors, who married a daughter of Rivers, or Redvers, Earl of Devon, surnamed Vernon from a place in France, which brought the Earldom of Devon into the Courtney family. A branch of this family were Emperors of Constantinople.

Champernone married a Courtney ; Chudleigh a Champernone ; and Coffin a Chudleigh.

Also, by Cary, of Cockington, Knt., who married with Courtney ; Coffin a Cary (Cockington is now part of the Coffin's Estate.) Courtney also married a grand-daughter of Edward the 1st. Lord William Courtney married Katherine daughter of Edward 4th, sister to Henry 7th's wife.

*Different Crosses of Royal Blood.*

Beaumont, 1st.—A natural daughter of Henry 1st.

Courtney, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th.—A daughter of Edward the 4th, niece of the Conqueror, and grand-daughter of Edward the 1st, King of England.

Pomeroy, 5th.—A natural daughter of Henry 1st.

Champernone, 6th.—A natural daughter of Richard, King  
of the Romans.

Coffin is descended through all these families, viz.—

Coffin with Cary, who married a Courtney.

Coffin with Chudleigh, who married a Beaumont.

Coffin with Chudleigh, who married a Beaumont.

Coffin with Prideaux, by Clifford, by Courtney.

Beaumont with Champernone, both Royal

Chudleigh and Pomeroy, ditto ditto

Ditto Ditto ditto ditto

Chudleigh and Beaumont, ditto ditto

Ditto Ditto ditto ditto

Chudleigh and Champernone, ditto ditto

Courtney and Champernone, ditto ditto

Champernone and Courtney, ditto ditto

Prideaux with Clifford, ditto ditto

Clifford with Courtney, ditto ditto

Cary, Knts., came into England with the Conquest. In  
King Henry 1st's time, one married Hester, 4th daughter of  
Rees, Prince of South Wales. The Families of Kildare and  
Desmond are descended from this marriage.

Bonvill, Lord of Shute, married a daughter of Sir Thomas  
Pine, by a daughter of Sir William Damerch, daughter of  
Lady Chester, daughter of Margaret Murch, daughter and  
heiress of William, Lord Harrington.

Extracted from a manuscript book belonging to Charles  
Langworthy, M.D., Bath, April, 1811.

The above note has been copied from a manuscript in pos-  
session of Pyne Coffin, Esq., of Portledge.

RELICS OF LOYALTY,  
OR  
SCRAPS FROM THE CATACOMBS:  
BEING REMAINS OF THE COFFIN FAMILY.

BY U. E. L.

Two families of the name of Coffin, Loyalists *pur sang*, came from Massachusetts to British America at the time of the American Revolution, 1775—78. One of these families settled on the River St. John, New Brunswick. The others established themselves at Quebec. The Dominion claims both, and owes something to either.

The Coffins are an ancient race. In the olden world, they prevailed before the time of the Pharaohs. In the new they came in with the Pilgrim Fathers. Twenty years after the landing from the *Mayflower*, in 1643, the first of the name put in an appearance from Brixton, near Plymouth, South Devon, England, at Newbury Port, in New Hampshire, moved on from thence, and settled for a time at Haverhill, where his name exists on the town books—Tristram Coffyn, spelt with a "y." In 1662 he bought one-tenth of the Island of Nantucket, moved there, and died in 1681, aged 71. His son James, was Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, County of Nantucket, from 1708 to 1712. His grandson, Jodiah,\* filled the same office from 1754 to 1774. Two of the same family, John and Jonathan, were assistant Judges about the same time.† From thence the family moved to Boston, but the descendants of old Tristram Coffin multiplied exceedingly on the prolific shores of Nantucket, and it is no light credit to a race of hardy seamen and skilful mariners, that they should have inspired that popular creation of the genius of Fennimore Cooper, the character of "Long Tom Coffin;" or, passing from fiction to fact, have given to the Dominion of Canada, as Minister of the Crown, a worthy Receiver-General, in the person of the Hon. Thomas Coffin, M.P. for Shelburne, Nova Scotia, who, both in moral and physical structure, not inaptly reproduces one of the happiest embodiments of American romance.

\* Farmer's Genealogical Register of first settlers of New England, Lancaster, Mass. 1829.

† See Washburn's Judicial History of Massachusetts.

In the fifth generation of lineal descent from Tristram Coffyn, William Coffin, born in 1690, married Ann, daughter of Eben Holmes; was a merchant, ship-owner, ship-master, farmer of excise and distiller, sailed a vessel, and traded between Boston and Charlestown, S. C., in days when assorted vocations were as common as assorted wares. He died in 1774, aged 83, amid the first throes of the American Revolution, leaving four sons, Ebenezer, Nathaniel, John, and William, all staunch Loyalists. The daughters, Mrs. De Blois, Mrs. Amory, and Mrs. Dexter, married all into some of the best families in Boston, and, woman-like, partly from the love for their husbands, and partly from the love of some new thing, took the other side.†

Of the sons, Ebenezer, the eldest, was father of Thomas Aston Coffin, for long private secretary to Sir Guy Carleton, by whose side he sat in the last boat which left Castle Garden on the evacuation of New York, 25th Nov., 1783. When Sir Guy Carleton became again Governor of Quebec, 1784, Coffin accompanied him, and by his influence was appointed Commissary-General to the British forces in Canada. With his friend and patron, then Lord Dorchester, he went to England, and died in London in 1810, very wealthy. He was grandfather to Mrs. Bolton, wife of Col. Bolton, R.A., who took an active part in the Red River Expedition of 1870, and earned thereby the distinction of C. M. & St. G. A younger brother of Thomas Aston, Eben, so called for the sake of pleasant shortness, carrying with him, possibly, the coloured chattels of the Boston family, went South, where he acquired property, and wallowing in a wealth of "Sea-Island" cotton, begot Thomas Aston Coffin, of Carolina, whose descendants, with an hereditary instinct, distinguished themselves by their chivalrous devotion to a failing cause in the late confederate war.

The second son, Nathaniel, brought up as a merchant, became King's cashier of the Customs at Boston, and acquired property. When the Royal troops evacuated Boston, in 1776, he withdrew to England, but returned to New York in 1781, and died on landing. He left three sons, afterwards General John Coffin, of New Brunswick, and Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin, Bart., of both of whom more hereafter.

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† Memoir of the family of Amory. Boston, 1856, by T. C. Amory.

The third son, John, married Isabella Childs, of Boston, 5th Dec., 1738, and took refuge in Quebec in July, 1775.

William, the fourth son, also came to Canada, and was Sheriff of Kingston, Ont., towards the end of the last century.

Of the four sons, Ebenezer, the eldest, died before the Revolution. The three younger, Nathaniel, John, and William, were *stiberon*, unyielding, incorrigible Loyalists, and as such were, with many others, proscribed by name, in an Act, of the Massachusetts Legislature, passed Sept., 1788, and banished under penalty, in case of return, "of the pains of death without benefit of clergy."

The descendants of Nathaniel, to wit, General John Coffin and family, made for themselves a place and a name among the earliest settlers of New Brunswick. John, his uncle, with a wife and eleven children, came to Quebec. Both of these families sacrificed much in the cause of their king and country, accounting it as nothing, for the sacrifice carried with it enough of honour to be its own reward. Nor was the reward wanting even in the flesh. The greatest of Nations cannot restore to its despoiled adherents houses and lands, the proud results of honest labour, or the scenes of early affection: but all that could be done was done. The nation was not ungrateful to those who had earned its gratitude, and who knew how to utilize it. Employment, competence, and honourable advancement in the public service were offered freely to all. The men of these families were not wanting to themselves or to their opportunities, and, as may be shown hereafter, have not failed, each in his allotted sphere of duty, to justify the modest motto of their family—

Extant recté factis præmia.

General John Coffin, of New Brunswick, was the second son of Nathaniel Coffin, above mentioned, a merchant of Boston, and was born in 1756; was sent to sea at an early age, most probably in a ship wherein his father had an interest, and became chief mate at the age of eighteen, navigated his ship to England in 1774, where the Government took her up for the conveyance of troops to America. He brought out part of a regiment under Sir William Howe, reached Boston on the 15th June, 1774, and landed the regiment under Bunker Hill, the day of the engagement, the 17th. Young, enthusi-



astic, and full of fight, he contrived to play so conspicuous a part in the action as to lead to his presentation to General Gage, who made him an ensign on the field. Not long after, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. In 1776 he was detailed to New York, where he raised a mounted rifle corps, called the Orange Rangers, of which he was made commandant, and from which he exchanged into the New York Volunteers in 1778. He took part in the battle of Long Island, in the year 1777; in those of Germantown and Ste. Lucie, in 1778; in Briar Creek, 1779; and Cambden, 1780. Being ordered to the Southern States, he there raised a corps of partizan cavalry, composed chiefly of loyal planters, inspired by the cavalier spirit of the early settlers. Coffin and his corps took a telling part in the actions at Hampton, Hobkirk's Hill, and Eutaw Springs, all of which were fought in 1781. General Greene, one of the ablest of the lieutenants of General Washington, endeavoured to overwhelm the British Commander, Colonel Stuart, who had fallen back on a strong position at Eutaw Springs. Greene was supported by Colonel William Washington, a distinguished partizan leader, with a numerous cavalry. Coffin and his troopers were with Stuart. Washington Irving, in his "Life" of his great namesake, relates how the advance on Eutaw was averted by Major Coffin with 150 infantry and 50 cavalry; and, further on, how, "Colonel Washington had rashly dashed forward with his dragoons, lost most of his officers and many of his men, and a horse shot under him, and would have been slain had not a British officer interposed, who took him prisoner."\* This version of the story is the truth, though not the precise truth. The fact is, that the two leaders of the cavalry, on both sides, the one pursuing, the other covering the retreat, came into personal collision. Both were powerful men, splendid horsemen, and good swordsmen, and neither inclined to cry "hold, enough." The scene of the conflict was the top of a dyke or narrow road, with water at each side. Washington's horse swerved or jibbed; in bringing him round the rider drew a pistol and fired, but missing his mark, shied the weapon at his antagonist, knocking him off his horse; but

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\* Washington Irving's *Life of George Washington*, vol. 4, pp. 364-5. Also, Stuart's despatch to Earl Cornwallis, 9th Sept., 1781, given in *Tarleton's Campaigns in 1780-81*, p. 512, wherein Stuart publicly thanks Major Coffin. Also, *Lee's Memoirs of the War*, pp. 285-7-9-90, vol. 2.

the effort and delay had isolated him from his following, his horse was shot under him, and he was taken prisoner. We may be sure that Coffin would have interposed had there been any risk of his being slain. It is still more sure that these two brave men, who had known each other well in private life, with a grim joke at their mutual mishaps, rode back to camp to share the same meal and the same tent.

At the close of the conflict in Virginia, Coffin received from Lord Cornwallis the gift of a handsome sword, accompanied by a letter conferring on him the rank of Major by brevet. Not being included in the capitulation of Yorktown, he withdrew to Charlestown, in South Carolina, attracted by the charms of Miss Annie Matthews, daughter of William Matthews, of St. John's Island, to whom he was shortly after married. Conspicuous and obnoxious, he was eagerly sought for as one of those malignants who should be smitten hip and thigh, and had many narrow escapes from capture. A story is told of him, which has been told of others who, in like strait, stood not upon the order of their hiding, but hid at once. On one occasion, being closely pressed, the fashion of the day was his salvation, the gallant soldier took refuge under the hoops of his brave mistress, which, seeing that he was six feet high and proportionately stalwart, must have been no slight feat of compression.

When Charlestown was evacuated, Major Coffin made his way up to New York, crossed the Hudson, having eluded all attempts at his capture, and presented himself at headquarters, to the great astonishment of his friends in the British Army. In 1782, 28th August, he was the subject of the following general order :

"Sir Guy Carleton, Commander-in-chief: Brevet-Major John Coffin of the New York Volunteers having repeatedly received the public thanks of the principal officers under whose command he has served, and on the 8th Sept., 1781, (Battle of Eutaw Springs), being only 25 years of age, having distinguished himself very particularly, is, for those services, appointed Major of the King's American Regiment, vacant by the death of Major Grant."

Previous to the evacuation of New York, and probably in view of it, Major Coffin and others, who were looked upon by

the victorious Republicans as contumacious beyond hope, and who were, therefore, thrust out beyond the pale of redemption, were shipped off by the British Government to New Brunswick, a magnificent country, but then unreclaimed and unknown.

At seven-and-twenty he laid down his sword and took up his axe, accompanied by a wife, delicate and delicately nurtured, but full of spirit, three black men and one black woman, all brought from Charlestown. He went to work energetically, housed and established himself in a beautiful situation on the river St. John, and in twenty years made for himself a valuable property, which he named Alwington Manor.

Although retired from active employ, he still remained in the service. In June, 1794, H. R. Highness the Duke of Kent, then Governor of Nova Scotia, visited New Brunswick, accompanied by the Duke of Clarence. The Royal Brothers honoured Major and Mrs. Coffin with their company at Alwington Manor, and graciously permitted one of their youngest children, a boy born a few days previously, to be named after them, Henry Edward.

The fine person, soldierly bearing and gentle manner of the brave cavalier, no doubt stood him in good stead when opportunity offered, and combined with the zealous exertions of such friends as the Marquis of Hastings, the Lord Rawdon of the American War, and Lord Dorchester, the Sir Guy Carleton of the American War, under both of whom he had served, obtained for him the rank of Lieut.-Colonel in 1804. In 1805 he went to England, where he was received with much distinction, and was presented to the King by the commander-in-chief. He returned to his adopted country, New Brunswick, in that year, where he occupied himself in improving a valuable property and continued in a career of active public usefulness. He became Member of the House of Assembly for King's County, a Member of Council, and Chief Magistrate for King's County for many years, Commissioner for the Indians, &c.

In 1811, the impending struggle with the United States aroused all the warlike instincts of the old partizan, he snuffed the battle afar off, and at once offered to raise a regiment

for local service. Early in 1812 he had under his command 600 men ready for the field, which enabled the Government to send the 104th regt. on to Canada, then hardly pressed by invasion. In 1812, the regiment known as the "New Brunswick Fencibles," mustered 600 strong, composed of young men, the friends and neighbours of their respected commander. At the peace of 1815, the Colonel was promoted to the rank of Major-General, the regiment was disbanded, and General Coffin returned to half-pay once more. By the slow progress of seniority he rose at last to the top of the Army List as the oldest general officer, and having for many years alternated in his residence between England and New Brunswick, died at last at the house of his son, Admiral John Townsend Coffin, in King's County, on the 12th May, 1838, aged 82. The foregoing sketch has been epitomized from a more lengthy memoir compiled by his youngest son, Admiral Henry Edward Coffin ; but the writer of this, who knew the General well in his later days, recalls with affectionate recollection the noble presence and generous character of the chivalrous old soldier, a relic of the days in which giants were, in stature and in heart, true to his king and country, a humble Christian and an honest and brave man, who united to the heroism of a Paladin the endurance of the pioneer, and when he could no longer serve his Prince in the field, served him still better, by creating a new realm of civilization and progress in the heart of the primeval forest. His name will ever be held in honour in New Brunswick.

Eight of the children of General and Mrs. Coffin, all natives of New Brunswick, lived to make their way in the world, thanks to a grateful and helpful country.

The eldest son, General Guy Carleton Coffin, died in April, 1856, at the age of 73, a General Officer of the Royal Artillery.

The second and third sons are living still, both at an advanced age, and both admirals in the British Service.

John Townsend Coffin, the eldest of the two, entered the British Navy as a Midshipman, in 1799. He was Master-mate on board of the *Harrier*, 18, when she captured the Dutch Frigate, *Pallas*, 36, near Java, 26 July, 1806, and for his gallant conduct obtained a Lieutenancy. He was appoint-

ed to the *Victorius*, 74, when on the 21 of Feb., 1812, she encountered the *Rivoli*, 74, with eleven enemy's vessels fresh out of port. A desperate conflict ensued of four hours and a half duration, in which the British Ship *Victorius* lost 126 killed and wounded, and the brave Frenchmen 400. The *Rivoli* and consorts surrendered, and were safely brought into port, under charge of Lieutenants Coffin and White, who received great praise for seamanship and bravery in *Gazette* 1812, p. 522. He was promoted to the rank of commander, 1 July, 1814; post captain, 26 Dec., 1822; rear admiral, 1841.

Admiral John Townsend Coffin is the present proprietor of the Magdalen Islands, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which he holds under the will of his late uncle, Sir Isaac Coffin, to whom they were granted by Letters patent under the great seal in 1798, and by whom they have been strictly entailed in the family. Admiral Coffin has been a thoughtful and beneficent proprietor of these islands, having visited them upon several occasions, and done much to improve their material condition.

Henry Edward, named after the Dukes of Kent and Clarence, entered the British Navy, 1st June, 1805, served on shore in Egypt, in 1807, on the home and North American stations, in the East Indies, on the coast of Africa, the Brazils, and in the West Indies, amid scenes where the British seaman is wont to battle with the tempest and against climate and disease, for want of having something better to do.

He became lieutenant, 1814; commander, 1829; post captain, 1841; rear admiral, 1856.

The eldest daughter, Caroline, married the Hon. Charles Grant, of Canada, afterwards Baron de Longueuil, and died at Alwington, near Kingston, in 1868, aged 84.

A second daughter married General Sir Thomas Pearson, K.C.B., an officer very much distinguished in Canada during the war of 1812.

A third married Colonel Kirkwood of the British Army, and is still living in Bath, England.

A fourth married John Barnett, Esquire, also an officer in the British Army, and who subsequently occupied a high official position in the Island of Ceylon.

The fifth, Mary, married Charles R. Ogden, Esquire, Attorney-General, Lower Canada, and died in 1827.

Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin, Bart., was a brother of General John Coffin, of New Brunswick, and a younger son of Nathaniel Coffin, of Boston before named. He was born in 1760, and, under the patronage of Rear-Admiral John Montague, entered the Royal Navy in 1773, remained constantly afloat, serving in different ships, until 1778, when he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant; was appointed second lieutenant of the *Adamant*, 1779—and in 1781 was on board of the *Royal Oak*, engaged in a very severe action with the French fleet, under M. de Ternay. In 1782, having been made master and commander, he took the command of the *Avenger*. Thence he volunteered into the *Barfleur*, 74, under Captain Alex. Hood, when the English fleet sailed from St. Kitts with the spirited design of attacking the fleet of Count de Grasse, in Basse Terre Roads, and he was enabled to share in this glorious achievement, 12 April, 1782. Very soon after he was appointed, by Admiral Rodney, post-captain of the *Shrewsbury*, 74. Early in 1783, a general peace having been proclaimed, the *Shrewsbury* was paid off. In 1786, he was appointed to the *Thisbe* frigate, and brought Lord Dorchester and his family to Quebec, taking refuge, when very late in the season at Halifax, but in the spring of 1787, he returned to Canada on leave, and remained about a twelve-month. At this time he applied, by petition, formally to Lord Dorchester for a Grant of the Magdalen Islands in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. It appears that, in the preceding autumn, the *Thisbe* had been becalmed off these Islands, and Captain Coffin, struck by their appearance, had asked Lord Dorchester to give them to him, if in his power. The request was renewed in the following year, but the Letters Patent were not expedited until 1798, during the governorship of Robert Prescott. In 1790, at the time of the Nootka Sound difficulty with Spain, Captain Coffin was appointed to the *Alligator* frigate, 28 guns, but the Deas gave in, and made reparation, and the armament was discontinued; but while laying at the Nore under sailing orders, and the wind blowing strong, a man fell overboard, Coffin plunged in after him, and saved his life; but in the effort suffered a personal injury which clung to him ever after. In the spring of 1791, the

*Alligator* was ordered to Halifax and Quebec to receive Lord Dorchester and family, and, with them returned to England. The ship was then laid up, and the captain and crew paid off. In 1793, at the outbreak of the great French War, Captain Coffin was appointed in command of the *Melampus*, 36 guns, and was actively employed in the Channel and among the Channel Islands, but, from over exertion, the injury received in saving the life of the sailor at the Nore became aggravated, and for four months he was crippled. But the vigour of his character had been noted, and his services appreciated. On his recovery, he was employed on shore—first at Leith, in what was called the regulation service. In 1795, he was sent to Corsica, as one of His Majesty's Commissioners of the Royal Navy. Thence, in the same capacity, he was transferred to Lisbon. Thence, in 1798, to Mahon, in the Island of Minorca. Thence he was brought home and put in charge of the King's yard at Sheerness. In April, 1804, he was promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral of the white squadron, and was appointed second in command at Portsmouth. As a further reward for service of unusually long continuance and merit, Rear-Admiral Coffin was, on the 19th of May, 1804, advanced to the dignity of a Baronet of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.\*

In 1811, he married Elizabeth, only daughter of William Greenly, Esq., of Titley Court, Herefordshire, and, assuming the lady's name, became Sir Isaac Coffin Greenly but this union proved to be ill assorted. The lady indulged in literary tastes of a religious tendency. She was said to be addicted to writing sermons at night, to the disturbance of the slumbers of her rollicking spouse, and so, after a space, they separated. She remained Lady Greenly, and he resumed the name of Coffin. The fault was certainly not with the lady, who was a clever and exemplary woman, but somewhat eccentric in her ways. In after life she was well known in Bath, England; remarkable for wearing, Welshwoman fashion, a man's round hat, a riding habit cut short, and for wielding a gold-headed cane.

Sir Isaac, having tried matrimony with poor success, and having nothing better to do, took to politics, affected Liberal-

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\* See "Naval Chronicle," 1804, vol. 12.

ism and consorted with the Whigs. He represented Ilchester in Parliament for some years, and was noted for the rough humour of his sayings, which savoured much of "tar and feathers." He was a personal friend of the Duke of Clarence, who, when he became William IV., continued to shew him favour. When, in 1832, to accomplish the passing of the Reform Bill, it became necessary to swamp the House of Lords, by the creation of a new batch of Peers, the name of Sir Isaac Coffin appeared upon the King's private list, but the King's Ministers opposed the creation, and it was dropped. It appears that, about this time, Sir Isaac had been guilty of a nautical freak which was regarded as unpatriotic. He was fond of visiting America, and of associating with his Boston relatives, and had fitted out a schooner as a floating nautical school, manned it with lads of his own name—who were as plentiful as codfish on the coast of Nantucket—and brought them, on show, round to Quebec, flying the American flag. The flag and the story took wind in the same direction, and spoiled his prospects, not without just reason.

He was a clever, pushing, energetic seaman, much given to rough humour, and the practical jokes in vogue in his day. He was equally ready with hand and tongue, having upon one occasion pugilistically fought his way through a cabal of disappointed Portuguese contractors at Lisbon, intent on his destruction with the knife. Of his ready wit many stories are told—one will suffice. Once, on his way to Titley Court, stopping to bait at Chepstow, he was informed by the inn-keeper that an American, a prisoner, confined in the castle hard by, claimed to be his relative, and prayed for an interview. Sir Isaac, curiously, acceded, went to the prison, and was introduced to "a gentleman of colour." Both surprised and amused, he was informed by Sambo that he was an American, a namesake, and must therefore be a relation, as no one would be likely to take his name for the fun of the thing. "Stop, my man, stop," interjected the Admiral, "let me ask you a question. Pray, how old may you be?" "Well," replied the other, "I should guess about thirty-five." "Oh! then," rejoined his interlocutor, turning away, "there is clearly a mistake here, you can't be one of my coffins—none of my people *ever turn black before they are forty.*"

Sir Isaac Coffin, dying without direct issue, in 1838, at



Cheltenham, England, the baronetage expired with him. He left the bulk of his fortune to his nephew, Admiral John Townsend Coffin, and by his will the Magdalen Islands are strictly entailed *substitutés* on members of his family, who must continue to bear his name, and the coat of arms given to him by the King in 1804.

It has been said that two families of this name left Massachusetts at the time of the American revolution, and that one of the two took refuge in Quebec.

John Coffin, the father and the leader of this second family, was born in Boston, Mass., 1730, and was brother of Nathaniel, the father of General John and Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin. In 1758 he married Isabella Childs. In the Boston Confiscation Act, Sept., 1788, he is styled distiller, and combined this business, no doubt, with that of merchant and shipowner. Loyal to the core, and knowing that he was a marked man, he resolved, early in 1775, to place his family in safety. Embarking, therefore, his household goods, and his household gods, his wife, eleven children, and effects, on board of his own schooner, the *Neptune*, he brought them safely round to Quebec, where, on the 23rd August, 1775, he bought from "La Dame Veuve Lacroix," a piece of land at the "*près de ville*," well known during the siege which followed as the "Potash." He went to work with characteristic energy to establish a distillery, when his work was interrupted by that celebrated event. In the autumn, the American forces under Montgomery and Arnold invaded the Province—Quebec was invested. Late in the year John Coffin joined the Quebec-enrolled British Militia; and the building he had designed for a distillery became a battery for the defence of the approach from Wolfe's Cove. The battery was armed with the guns of a privateer frozen in for the winter. Her commander, Barnsfare, and his seamen handled the pieces, and by his side John Coffin, the American Loyalist, shared the merit of the defence.

Before that battery, on the memorable morning of the 1st January, 1776, fell General Montgomery, and the Chief Officers of his staff, and with them the last hopes of the American cause in Canada.

In a paper prepared by his grandson, Lieut.-Col. Coffin, of

Ottawa, read before the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, 18th December, 1872, and printed under their auspices,\* it is shown on the testimony of Sir Guy Carleton, then Governor of Canada, and of Colonel Maclean, then Commandant of Quebec, "that to the resolution and watchfulness of John Coffin, in keeping the guard at the *près de ville* under arms, awaiting the expected attack, the coolness with which he allowed the rebels to approach, the spirits which his example kept up among the men, and to the critical instant when he directed Captain Barnsfare's fire against Montgomery and his troops, is to be ascribed the repulse of the rebels from that important post, where, with their leader, they lost all heart."†

There can be no question but that the death of Montgomery saved Quebec, and with Quebec, British North America, to the British Crown, and that, of the brave men who did this deed of "derring do"‡ John Coffin was one of the foremost.

It is mortifying to relate, but the truth must be told, John Coffin was but ill requited. He had suffered great losses, and he had rendered services and was deceived by promises. He was promised both money and land. He got neither. In those days "how to do nothing" constituted the science of Colonial Government. Between the Chateau de St. Louis and Downing Street lay the very limbo of circumlocution, paved the whole length with good intentions. Downing Street objected to grants of land and grants of places, unless bestowed on their own creatures. Canada, on the other hand, disliked monopolies which it could not exclusively appropriate. Hence arose a bickering of references and reports, consideration and reconsideration. Now, a man astride upon a reference is like a child upon a rocking-horse, always in sluggish motion but never onwards. In 1795 Lord Dorchester, who had returned to Quebec as Governor-General, appointed John Coffin Surveyor-General of Woods, but Downing Street disapproved of an appointment which impinged upon patronage, and the salary—the *pabulum vite*—came in dribbets. Little

\* Handsomely commended in the London *Spectator*, Oct., 1873.

† Letter from Colonel Allan Maclean, dated Quebec, 28th July, 1776. Also from Sir Guy Carleton, dated Jenningsbury, 25th Dec., 1779.

‡ "Derring do." See "*Ivanhoe*," cap. 29.

wonder if the sturdy old Loyalist, worn by undeserved illness, had, like the soldiers of Montgomery when they lost their leader, "lost all heart."

But stiff old John Coffin did not lose heart. He worked on cheerily. He possessed the advantage of an abiding faith in the honour of the Crown. He well understood the nature of the obstacles which stood between him and the light of royal justice. No doubt he denounced the administration with vigorous expletives. Had he lived in our days he would have been strong in opposition, and in due course, possibly, would have had administered to his own relief, but as it was, he worked on without repining, brought up and maintained a large family—he had 15 children born to him (eleven survived him)—in the enjoyment of a clear conscience and of comfort, if not of affluence, and died 28<sup>th</sup> Sept., 1808, aged 78, as the record of his burial has it: "one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the City of Quebec, and Inspector of Police for the said City."

Whatever may have been the shortcomings of the Government so far as related to John Coffin himself, his children had no cause to complain. Directly, or indirectly, all thrived under the fostering protection of the Crown. The men obtained employment in the public service, and in due process of time, that share of promotion to which their talents and their opportunities fairly entitled them. The women, if unable to do service personally, married those who did.

The eldest daughter, Isabella, became the wife of Colonel McMurdo, H.M. — Regt. Her sons served in India. A grandson was captain in the Royal Canadian Rifles when that fine regiment was disbanded at Kingston in 1870.

The second, Susannah, married the Hon. John Craigie, of Quebec, Provincial Treasurer, a brother of Lord Craigie, Lord of Session in Scotland. One son, Admiral Craigie, a very meritorious officer, died at Dawlish, in 1872. A daughter married Captain Martin, who led one of the storming parties at the capture of Fort Niagara in 1814, and another survives yet, the mother of the Hamiltons, of Quebec, one of the first of the mercantile houses of the Dominion.

Margaret, the third daughter, married her cousin, Roger Hailes Sheaffe, born in Boston, the son of a U. E. Loyalist,

and who, through the kind interest of Earl Percy, had obtained a commission in the British Army. At the time of their marriage he was Major in Brock's Regiment, the 49th. The name of Brock is so far identified with all that was great and good in the war of 1812, as to be, in death, inseparable from the victory of Queenston Heights (13th October, 1812); but Brock's great feat of arms was the capture of Detroit, coupled with the surrender of General Hull and his army. Sheaffe won the battle of Queenston Heights. Brock was slain at 7 o'clock in the morning, and for some hours the action was in suspense. At noon Colonel Sheaffe moved up from Niagara to the rescue, and at 3 p.m. attacked the American force in flank and rear, and hurled them from the rocks of Queenston into the Niagara river. For this great service he was made a baronet. At Brock's funeral, Sheaffe was chief mourner. Captain Coffin, A.D.C., and Asst. Com.-General Coffin were pall bearers. Nothing could be more honourable to the Americans than their conduct on this occasion. They paid every mark of respect to the memory of Brock, and fired minute-guns during the ceremony.

Of the sons—the eldest, John, was an officer in the Commissariat, and died Deputy Commissary-General at Quebec, March, 1837. The second son, William, obtained a Commission in the 1st Bat. of the King's Royal Regiment of New York, or Sir John Johnston's Regiment. Subsequently, through the kind influence of His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, he obtained a commission in the regular army, and served half the world over. He retired from the service in 1816, a Captain in the 15th Regiment and Brevet-Major, and died in England in 1836. His only surviving son, William Foster Coffin, was Sheriff of the District of Montreal for some years, and is now Commissioner of Ordnance and Admiralty Lands Department of the Interior, Canada. This gentleman married, in 1842, Margaret, second daughter of Isaac Winslow Clarke, of Montreal, who, in 1774, was the youngest member of the firm of Richard Clarke and Sons, of Boston, Massachusetts, to which was consigned the historical cargo of tea. Mr. Clarke, collecting debts at Plymouth, in 1774, was thwarted in his unpatriotic design by a mob. Pelted, hustled, hounded for his life, he fled to England. He had asked for bread, and received a stone. The British Government took

him by the hand, and appointed him to the Commissariat, and sent him to Montreal, where he rose to the rank of Deputy Commissary-General, and, after 50 years of service, died in 1822, greatly respected as a citizen and by the services, and another instance of the constancy of England to those who are true to her.\*

The third son, the Hon. Thomas Coffin, was a member of the Legislative Council of Lower Canada and Lieut.-Colonel of Militia. He married a Demoiselle de Tonancour, and lived and died at Three Rivers, Province of Quebec, 1841. A son of his was for many years Prothonotary for the District of Montreal.

The fourth son, Francis Holmes, entered the Royal Navy, and served during the long war with France, and died an Admiral in 1835. His eldest son, General Sir Isaac Coffin, K.C. Star of India, died at Black Heath, Oct., 1872.

The fifth son, Nathaniel, lived and died in Upper Canada. At the outbreak of the war of 1812 he joined the volunteer companies, and was aide-de-camp to Sir Roger Sheaffe at the Battle of Queenstown Heights. After the surrender of Colonels Scott, Totten, and the other American survivors of the conflict, the leading officers were invited to dine by Sheaffe, and here the following incident occurred, as given in Mansfield's "Life of General Wingfield Scott," p. 48, illustrated by an engraving: "Previous to the announcement of dinner, a message was delivered to Scott, that persons without wished to speak with the 'tall American.' Scott stood 6 feet 5 inches in his boots. He left the room, and found himself confronted, in a narrow passage, by two Indian chiefs, Captain Jacobs and Young Brant, who questioned him abruptly, and in broken English, as to the shot marks in his clothes, each alleging that he had fired repeatedly, but without success, at his conspicuous person. One of them seized Scott by the arm as if to turn him round, and when he was flung off indignantly, with the exclamation, 'off, rascal, you shot like a squaw,' both drew their knives. At this moment Captain Coffin, A.D.C., entered the door behind the Indians, and seeing at a glance how things stood, called instantly to the guard, and seizing

\* See Lorenzo Sabine (American Loyalist). Boston, 1847, p. 212.

one of the aggressors by the arm, put a pistol to the head of the other. This prompt demonstration quashed the tumult, and probably saved Scott's life."\* (See also Stone's "Life of Brant," vol. 2, pp. 514, 515.) Coffin had obtained at an early age, a commission in the 71st Regt., and retired from it under circumstances which shew the vigour and the rigour of British discipline. His regiment was quartered in Ireland, and on the occasion of an election riot had been confined to barracks; but an attractive ball being on the *tapis* for the same night, three of the subalterns, mere boys, "broke bounds," and entered the charmed circle. The *escapade* reached the Colonel. The culprits were summoned before him, charged with insubordination, and informed that they must either stand a court-martial or retire from the regiment. They accepted the latter alternative. Coffin returned to Canada, and to his last day deplored, among his friends, this juvenile indiscretion. But the Government, though stern were not ungenerous, and to his last day he received his half-pay as an ensign in the 71st regiment. Colonel Coffin filled for many years the office of Adjutant-General of Militia in Upper Canada, and it is no slight proof of the esteem in which he was held, and of the popularity he had earned, that in his later years the Legislature, not prone to such weakness, voted him a very liberal retiring pension, which he enjoyed to his death, 1835. He died at Toronto, very much beloved and regretted.

The sixth son, James, died at Quebec in 1835, an Assistant Commissary-General.

These men and women were all living instances of the loyal faith in which they were born, and of its honourable and just reward.

It is not pretended for one moment that the loyalty of these people was of better quality than the universal loyalty around them; but it was of the oldest date; it had stood the test of trial and of time, and those who had suffered much may be pardoned some degree of pride in the strength of their endurance. To an Englishman, the outspoken loyalty of Canada is a matter of surprise. To the English

\* A story somewhat similar is told of Washington after the Battle of Monongahela. See "Spark's Life," 1st vol., p. 66. Boston, 1839.



mind it looks like a work of supererogation ; and with reason ; for an Englishman *at home* would no more prate of his loyalty than he would of his honesty or his pluck, or of any other of those sterling qualities which are justly held to be the characteristics of Englishmen ; but on this side of the Atlantic, in days antecedent to the American Rebellion of 1862, loyalty has been a mark for persecution, and a by-word of reproach. The descendants of those who suffered, and gloried in their sufferings, bear no limp or lukewarm testimony to the faith that is in them, and to effects as honourable to the land of their allegiance as to themselves. If they have been true to the Empire, the Empire has been true to them, and they are proud of any opportunity to acknowledge their share of the obligation.



THE MSS. OF J. R. P. COFFIN, ESQ., AT PORTLEDGE, N. D.

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During my recent visit to North Devon for the purpose of inspecting the parish records at Parkham, I had the pleasure for a couple of days of enjoying the hospitality of J. R. P. Coffin, Esq., at Portledge, the seat of the family for the last six, if not, indeed, seven or eight centuries.

Every available moment of my time during my stay was devoted to an examination of the MSS. documents and papers, which came into Mr. Coffin's possession upon his accession to the ancestral property, and which may be said in some sense to constitute a part of the heirlooms of Portledge.

The collection of papers and documents at Portledge, anciently "Portlynch," may be divided into three classes: compilations, in the form of volumes, ancient deeds and papers, and letters, the accumulation of many generations, and of sufficient extent to fill a considerable number of chests and boxes. They are at present mostly in a confused and unsorted state, and it is owing to this fact, combined with the comparative shortness of my visit, that I am unable to give any particulars relative to a large amount of correspondence, extending, it is believed, from the reign of Elizabeth to the beginning of that of Queen Anne.

Some of the most valuable, probably, among the MSS. volumes which formerly formed part of the collection of Portledge are now in other hands, owing to the fact that in the year 1801 the library, a collection of considerable celebrity, and which it had taken a couple of centuries to bring together, was sold by the then owner of the estate to Mr. S. Woolmer, of Exeter, by whom a printed catalogue was published and circulated, with the object of selling the rare and diversified contents of the library in detail.

In this catalogue, a copy of which is preserved at Portledge, the two following items seem to me especially deserving of notice:—

"1320. A recapitulation of remarkable occurrences contained in Mr. Lapthorne's letters in the year 1690 to 1699, an historical detail of anecdotes and singular circumstances, transcribed in the hand of Ric. Coffin, celebrated by Prince in his worthies of Devon."

Its present locality is not known, but the letters themselves, written by Mr. Lapthorne, then residing in London, probably more than 200 in number, unsorted, and some few of them in a decaying condition, still form part of the collection at Portledge.

The next article mentioned in the catalogue is of equal, if indeed not greater interest; its present locality is also unknown.

"1321. Risdon MSS. of Devon in folio; a very old copy, with eight folio volumes of MSS. of the Courts Baron (some ancient) relative to the Coffin family, in the which a number of persons in the North of Devon occur, and a packet of 28 leaves, or fragments of the genealogies or families in Devon, £10 10s."



Other MSS. mentioned in the catalogue; among them—"The singular articles in MSS., most of which were found in the drawers at Portledge, and appear to have been untouched for many years," are the following:—

"1322. A chronicle of families from Wm. the Conq. to King James I., folio, £2 2s."

"1323. A chronicle of collections from chronicles and histories, from King Edward III. to 1640, £2 2s."

"20 MSS. of various kinds, £1 1s."

The six MSS. volumes next described are in the possession of the owner of Portledge.

"Visitation of Devon, by Glover, Somerset Herald, 1564. A folio vol., 144 leaves of paper, filled with the arms and pedigrees of Devonshire families." On the obverse of the fly leaf is written by Mr. Ric. Coffin (mentioned below)—"This Visitation, as Mr. Laphorne writt to me, who bought (it) at an auction in London, was writ by one Glover, a man of fame in his time. It cost 30s." This seems to be a valuable volume, and its sides are lined and strengthened with portions of a beautifully-written 14th century MSS., apparently a Latin translation of Josephus.

A folio volume in old calf, containing about 204 leaves of paper, being a Visitation of Cornwall, beginning with "The Village of Penzance." It is without title, and seems to be a most elaborate work.

A thick folio paper volume, in calf, containing about 480 leaves. It contains arms of Devonshire families and Devonshire corporations of various kinds. From the writing, its date would appear to be about 1680, and it is a beautifully-executed and voluminous work.

A large folio paper volume, containing 299 leaves, being an Heraldic Dictionary, compiled by Ric. Coffin, of Portledge, Sheriff of the county of Devon for several years. The volume is wholly in his handwriting, and is a most elaborate work. In a heraldic point of view, it is of considerable value, if we may judge from the vast amount of industry that has been displayed. In page 372 there is a notice that he was High Sheriff of Devon in 1685.

A small quarto paper volume, in limp parchment of about 135 leaves, intituled "A Miscellany of Historical Fragments." From the full details under the head of "Coffin," the book was probably compiled by a member of that family: apparently a Royalist of the time of Charles I.

A Dictionary of Heraldry, a small paper folio volume in old rough calf, containing about 150 leaves. The name of the compiler is not given, but it appears to be an elaborate work. Unlike most of the preceding vols., it contains no tracings or sketches of arms.

#### DEEDS.

The deeds and papers in the possession of Mr. Pine Coffin, belonging to various dates from the reign of Henry III. (1216) to that of Henry VIII. (1509), are probably from 400 to 500 in number. The great majority have been examined by me, and the following, principally among the more ancient, as throwing light upon the locality, or its social history in former times, have been selected for notice.

#### No. 1. 1254.

A small charter of Henry III., in Latin, with the great seal in green

wax, attached by a silken cord, but in a mutilated state. Whereby, at Bordeaux, on the 28th day of August, in the 38th year of his reign, 1254, at the instance of John de Courtenay, the Sovereign grants to Ric. Coffin, and his heirs for ever free warren in all his demesnes and lands of Alwinton in the county of Devon, so long as they be not within the bounds of the forest (Dartmoor).

Witnesses—B(oniface), Archbishop of Canterbury, and Peter (de Aigueblanche), Bishop of Hereford, Peter de Savoy, Ralph Fitznicholas, John, Ric., and Wm. de Grey, brothers, Roger de Montalt, Nic. de Molis, Rob. Walerand (two Devonshire names), Ralph de Bakepuz, Walkelin de Ardene, and others.

The deed is finely written and in good preservation.

#### No. 2. Henry III. (1216—1272).

A small deed, with a seal appendant in green wax, in fair preservation, representing a knight on horseback, but worn. The deed is beautifully written and in good preservation, and as it is the oldest among the family documents that I have been able to discover—(where is the Saxon [?Norman French] deed mentioned by Prince, I wonder?)—evidently belonging to the reign of Henry III., a translation of it is here annexed.

"Know, as well present as to come, that I, Richard Cophin, have rendered and granted unto Thomas de Dudderigge and his heirs the land of Duderigge and the land of Hole, together with Moggesmore, as his fee and right to be held of me and my heirs by royal service for two ferlings (fourth part of an acre), he rendering to me yearly two silver spurs at the Feast of St. Michael for all service. And for this grant aforesaid the said Thomas has given as acknowledgment 10s. And that this my grant may remain ratified and unshaken, I have taken care to strengthen it with the impression of my seal and the names of witnesses. These being witnesses—Wm. Punchardon (of Heanton Punchardon), Wm. Daneis (? of Orleigh adjoining A.), Adam de Stoddun, Wm. FitzHugh, Wm. de Grenville, (of Kilkhampton and Bideford), Wm. Boteler (? of Parkham), Richard Brutone (an Alwington name), Manger de Clokeino-tone, and his two sons, Robert a Rawstone, and Ric. his son, Jordan de Lancelles (? of Horwood), and Goscelyn his brother, Savari de Stonorde, Elylande ate Yo (Alwington), and Ralph his brother, Richard a Chittata-comtone (? Chittlehampton), Thomas his son, Thomas a Carkalonde, Helyas FitzJordan, Jordan a Giliscote, Walter a Giliscote, Ralph the Rustic and Robert his brother."

In reference to localities here named, "Dudderigge," now "Dodderidge," is situated in the adjoining parish of Parkham; and Carkalonde, now "Cartland," is the name given to a close about half a mile from Portledge.

#### No. 3. 1290.

The next deed in Latin, of which from its singular nature—it is relating to a bargain with a champion for a duel—a translation is given, bearing reference to Cockington, now in the possession of Mr. Pine Coffin, and came to the family, no doubt, among its earlier title deeds.

"Know all who the present writing shall see or hear that it is thus agreed between Ric. de Cokematone and Lettice his wife of the one part, and Ric. de Poutesholt of the other part, viz., that the aforesaid Ric. de C.

and Letice, his wife, are bound unto the aforesaid Ric. de P. in 20 marks sterling, for the duel which the said Ric. de P. shall wage for them against William FitzJordan for one messuage and one ploughland with the appurtenances in Cokematone : so that, if the aforesaid Richard shall complete the aforesaid duel, the Lord so granting, then the aforesaid 20 marks, the day on which the aforesaid duel shall take place, shall be delivered unto Richard de la Wille, before the said duel shall be begun, to be paid to the said Ric. de P. when the said duel is ended. And if the parties aforesaid, before the duel is stricken, then shall agree as to the tenements aforesaid, then the said Ric. de C. and Letice, his wife, shall pay for the blows of our Lord the King (*pro ictibus Domini Regis*) to the aforesaid Ric. de P. 40s. on the same day ; and if it shall happen that the parties aforesaid, on the day for the duel being stricken, shall agree upon the field, the duel being begun, then the said Ric. de C. and Letice, his wife, are bound on the same day to pay to the said Ric. de P. 10 marks without delay, out of the moneys so being in the keeping of the aforesaid Richard de la Wille, and this Ric. de C. and Ric. de P. have made corporal oath faithfully to observe ; and the aforesaid Ric. and Letice shall find mainpernors that the said covenant shall be fully observed, namely, Baldewyne de Belestone (*vide* Parkham, part 3, N. D. J., July 9, 1874) and Rob. de Stolkeheye (*Stockhaye*, *vide* W. Putford, part 1, N. D. J., Nov. 12, 1874), who acknowledge themselves to be mainpernors, and by this present writing they have bound themselves to make payment of the aforesaid money, and to pay the same in form aforesaid, each of them for the whole.

"In witness whereof the aforesaid parties to these writings in chirograph have alternately set their seals.

"Given at Exeter on the Wednesday next after the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the 18th year of the reign of Ed. I., 1290."

Of the seal in green wax, only a small fragment remains.

#### No. 4. 1290 or 1291.

From this deed it appears that the intended duel did not take place : a small parchment with a green seal attached in fair condition, with a Maltese cross for impression, but the legend almost undecipherable (*tr.*)

"To all to whom these present letters shall come, Wm. FitzJordan de Cokematone greeting, know all of you that whereas I had impleaded Ric. de C. and Letice, his wife, in full County (Court), and before Sir Matthew FitzJohn, Sheriff of Devon, on the Tuesday next after the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the 18th year of the reign of King Edward, by writ of right as to one messuage and one ploughland in Cokematone, as to which a duel was pledged (*vadiatum*) between us in the same County (Court), at length by friends in full County (Court) aforesaid, between us intervening, the said plea was set at rest in this manner, viz., that by the tenor of these presents I have remitted bequit claimed unto the said Ric. and Letice, and their heirs, all my rights and claim which I had, or in any way might in the aforesaid tenements, namely, in the whole ville of Cokematone, with its appurtenances, without anything held back by me or my heirs for ever. So that all this I, the said Wm., nor my heirs nor assigns, shall be able in future to demand, or

assert any right or claim in the aforesaid tenements, with their appurtenances, for eleven marks to me beforehand paid.

"In witness whereof, to these presents I have set my seal." These being witnesses—Sir Henry de Ralegh, John de Punchardone, Robert Beaupel (vide Knowston, N. D. J.—), Rob. de Crues (Cruwys), Nicholas de Filleigh, John de Vautort, of Clyst, Andrew de Treloske (Mr. Archer's place, Trelask, near Launceston), John de Aysselegh, and many others."

The services of their intended champion would have cost Ric. and Lettice nearly twice as much as the sum in dispute.

No. 5. About the same date.

A small parchment deed in Latin, the seal of which is lost, by which the aforesaid Ric. de Cokematone, with the assent of Lettice, his wife, grants to his son Richard (the Coffins married the heir of the Cockingtons), for his homage and service, all his land of Cokematone, with his houses, curtilages, villeins, and their suites (families, mark this), and chattels, he rendering one pair of white gloves, of the value of one penny, at the Feast of S. Michael, for all service, suit of Court, plaint, wardship relief, marriage, and demand, saving the King's service to the same land pertaining.

Witnesses—Gellanus le Denys (Orleigh), Peter de Halesbyri (vide Parkham, part 3, N. D. J., July 9, 1874), Sampson de Selusburg (vide Parkham, part 3, N. D. J., July 9, 1874), Walter Cressy, Simon Tyrel (vide Landkey, N. D. J., July 24, 1873), and others.

Domesday Book, 1086—

"Hamelyn holds of the Earl of Moriton Alwineton. Ordulf used to hold it in King Edward the Confessor's time, and paid tax for one hide and three virgates of land. Arable land consists of 29 ploughs. In demesne are two ploughs; and 10 serfs and 15 villeins and 15 bords have nine ploughs. Here are three acres of meadow, 60 of pasture, 33 of wood. Formerly worth 30s., now four pounds.

"Ordulf used to hold Monkleghe and Frithelstock, &c., &c."

Risdon, p. 243.

"Alwington, vulgarly Allington, the manor whereof hath been in the name of Coffin even from the Conquest, whose dwelling house is at Portledge, within the same parish.

"The antiquity of which family appeareth by a boundary deed, written in the Saxon language, between Ric. Coffin, lord of this manor and Cockementon, and the Abbot of Tavistock, lord of the manor of Abbots-ham, concerning the bounds of both their lands, which agreement was made with the consent of Galfride, the son of Baldwin, and Nicholas his heir, chief Lord of the fee; whereunto were witnesses—

"William Dacus (Dennis), Ric de Bohecumba (Bocomb, in Alwington), Joel de Launcels, Hen. de Aluco (Alneto, in Sir W. P.) Ralph de Lege, Hamlyn de Leigh, Fulke de Veteri Ponte."

Prince, in his life of Sir Wm. Coffin, youngest brother of Ric. Coffin, Sheriff of Devon 2 Henry VIII., 1511, says there was a Sir Ric. Coffin here as far back as Henry II., 1154, and that the manor had been in the family from the time of the Conquest. Referring to the Saxon deed mentioned by Risdon, *infra*, as confirmation, "which said deed expresseth

the bounds between the lands of Ric. Coffin, lord of the manor of Alwington and Cockementon—(did not this prove that the deed was much later?)—and the Abbot of Tavistock in lands in Abbotsham.

"Some of the terms and articles of which agreement are these, that the Abbot and Convent should give to the said Ric. Coffin and next heir full fraternity in his Church of Tavistock, to receive the habit of religion, whensoever (God so inspiring) they would, and that in the meantime he should have the privilege of one monk there," &c.—Exmagno MS. D. Gul. Pole, p. 203.

"Of this family, from the time of King Henry I. (1100 to 1135), unto the age of King Ed. II. (1307—1327), all were called Richard; of whom divers were knights.

"And to speak of later times, Sir Wm. Coffin was Master of the Horse at the Coronation of Anne, Queen of Henry the VIII., in the 25th (1534) of his reign, and of the Privy Chamber to that king, and High Steward of the Manor and Liberty of Stondon, co. Herts, where he lyeth buried.

"In this parish is Yeo, an ancient seat sometime of the Giffards, but now (1620) the inheritance of Sir Ed. Cary, whose ancestor matched with the heir of that name. The house is fair, according to the ancient building of those times.

"In a private chapel whereof is a tomb thus inscribed:

"Orate pro anima Willielmi Giffarde, Arm.

Qui obiit 22 die Decembris, A.D. 1400.

Cujus animæ propitiatur Deus."

Westcote, p. 314—

"Allington, Alwinton, and in Domesday Book, Hanitine, for by all these names it is written, was possessed by David de la Bear.

"Portledge therein was held by one of the name, by the heir of which race it came to the ancient and dignous family of Coffin, which in former times were of great estate, for in the time of Richard I. (1189—1199), I find Sir Hugo Coffin de Combe Coffin; in Henry III., (1216—1272), Sir Geoffrey Coffin, of the same place.

"Several other places retain yet the name, as—Coffin in Countesbury, Wm. Coffin of Coffinswell. The last married Harding.

"Yeo was the inheritance of Giffard, whose heir was first married to Berro (Bury), and Secondly to Cary.

"Tradition delivers that the Wm. Giffard (of the mont.) was one of the Justices of the King's Bench."

Sir Wm. Pole, p. 386, probably from whom Risdon got his information above, speaks thus of Portledge—

"Adjoyneth unto the Northsea.

"Ric. Coffin, Henry II., held two knights' fees of Rob., the king's sonne, of the honour of Okehampton.

"Rich. Coffin, 27 Henry III., two knights' fees in Alwington of Henry Herringe.

"Ric. C., 21 Ed. I.

"John C., 2 Ed. II.

"David C., 19 Ed. III.

"Michael C., 40 Ed. III.

"William C.

" John Coffin=—, d. and h. of Hathey.

Wm.=—, d. of John Cockworthy (most probably Cochementon—same arms.)

Ric.=Alicc, daughter of John Gambon, of Morston.

{ —William.

{ —John=Eliz., d. and coh. of Phil. de Hingeston.

{ —Ric.=Wilmote, d. of Sir Ric. Chidleghe. Issue, two daus.  
James. Thomas.

{ —William, heir of his bro. Ric.=

John=Mary, d. of Rob. Cary, of Clovelly.

Richard.

#### STRAY MEMS. OF EARLY MENTION OF COFFIN.

Ric. Coffin, in a deed, August 28, 1254, Henry III.

Wm. Cophin, Lord of Alwinton, temp. of Ed. I., 1272: deed.

Sir Ric., time of Ed. I.: deed.

Rich., 1311=—

{ —John, Lord of Alwinton in 1318.

{ —Roger. Lawrence. Ric. Joan.

David C., 32 Ed. III., 1359, had to wife Thomasia.

David, son and heir of David, 1370.

John C. and Thomazia, his wife, living 1427.

Ric., Sheriff of Devon 2 Henry VIII., 1511.

Ric., Sheriff of Devon 36 Charles II., 1683.

{ —John.

{ —Wm.=Marg., d. of Thomas Giffarde.

{ —Eldest son.

{ —John, of Hyde, in Northam.

Ric. Coffin=Honor, d. of Ed. Prydeaux, of Padstow.

Constantia, relict of John Wyse, with Rob. Bonefas and Maurice Berd, Esqrs., erected the aisle or guild of St. Thomas the Martyr, within the Parish Church of Tavistock. Document dated Nov. 6th, 1445, Bishop Lacy.—Oliv. Mon., p. 91.

James Coffin, of Monkleghe=—

Eliz., born Aug. 5, 1565, died May, 21, 1613=John Wyke, of J. d. ly, co. Som., Esquier.

A Mr. Coffin gave £3 12s. a year out of Furrington for the education of poor children in the parish of Crewkerne

13 Ed. II. Rob. Coffin, of Thorne Coffin, co. Som., bore on his seal —3 roundels between 5 xlets, equivalent to the present arms.

#### COFFIN PED.

From Herald's Vis. of Devon, 1620, p. 64—

Rich Coffin, of Portlinch, Esq.

= Willmott, or Eliz., or Anne, d. of Sir Ric. Chudleigh, by Mary, d. of Sir Nic. Wadham, of Merrifield.

{ —Edward, 2.

{ —James, 3=Mary Cole, of Knowstone.

{ —John s. and h. of Portlinch.

= Mary, d. of Rob. Cary, of Clovelly (M.P., and Margaret Millaton, relict of John Giffard, of Yeo.)

{ —Mary=John Wallacombe, of Coombe (in Roberorough.)

{ —Prudence=Berrie, of Berrie.

{ —Wilmot=Wm. Addington, of Horlebury, in Essex. (Vide ped.)

{ —John, 2nd son=Grace, d. of Ric. Berrie, of Berrienarbor.

{ Hump, s. and h., born 1605.

{ —Giles, 2, 1610. Nic., 3, 1613.

Ric., of Portlinch=Eliz., d. of Leonard Loveis, of Ugber, in Corn.

{ —Ric., 2. Leonard, 3. Edward, 4. James, 5. Henry, 6.

{ —Edward, 7. Wm., 8.

{ —Seven daughters: Mary, Ibbote, Wilmot, Eliz., Christian, Julian, Kath.

{ —John, of Portlinch=Eliz., d. of Hen. Harding, of Dorset.

Jane and Eliz.

#### CHURCH MONUMENTS.—COFFIN.

I am indebed to Mr. Dredge for the following.

"Here was buried the body of John Coffin, of Portlege, Esq., who died the — day of July, 1622, and in the 30th year of his age.

"Here was alsoe buried ye body of Richard Coffin, sonne of Richard, Esq., ye sonne of ye aforesaid John Coffin, who was born ye 13th of November, 1559, and died ye — of June, 1660."

"— of Ric. Coffin, of Portlege, Esq., who being borne 19th day of Oct., A.D. 16-8 (or 3), before its full time, shortly after—

"Here was alsoe buried Eliz., the second dau. of the said Ric. Coffin, who dyed the 9th day of April, 1654.

"Here was also buried Anne, the eighth daughter of the said Ric. Coffin, who dyed the 26th day of December, 1662."

Mural, over the priest's door, south wall, two figures, half length, shaking hands; under the man, the half-length figures of eight sons—John, Richard, Leonard, Edmund, James, Henry, Edward, William: under the woman, the busts of six daughters and an infant—Mary, Ibbet, Wilmot, Eliz., Christian, Julian, Kath.

Below, the following inscription, and arms—

Arms—Coffin: Arg. a chevron between three martlets, sable, impaling Loveis, or, a chevron, engrailed gules, between three shovellers, sable.

"M. S. Richard Coffin, of Portledge, Esq., and Eliz., his wife, daughter of Leonard Loveis, of Ugbeare, in ye Countie of Cornwal, Esq.

"Hee deceased July 25, Anno Domino 1617, æt. suæ. 48. Shee departed this life May 3, A.D. 1651, æt. suæ. 80."

"All heer pourtrayed shewes one joynd Coffin, sent  
Through heaven's canopy and to earth here lent,  
Perfumed with virtues, and bedew'd with grace,  
T' adorne them with a progeny for a space.  
One man took life from dead Elisha's bones,  
Eight martial sonnes lived from this Coffin's loynes,  
With daughters seven yt. from this vine did sprout,  
Like olive plants their table round about.  
Thrice happy fruitful Coffin, may thy buds spring,  
And to eternity halleluiahs sing.

"James Coffin, fifth and sole surviving sonne, to the pious memorie of  
his honourable parents, erected this monument 1651."

"Here lyeth entered the body of Kath., wife of Wm. Hockin, of  
Week, of Great Torrington, gent., and dau. unto Ric. Coffin, of Portledge,  
Esq., who departed this life ye 10th day of Sep., A.D. 1642, æt. sue. 41."

H.S.E. Ricardus Coffin de Portledge armiger. (? Is this the man  
referred to by Prince.—See presently.)

Vir et literis et senio venerandus, rara fide  
Et summa vitæ morumque integritate  
Præclarus. Regi patriæque fidelis servus  
Necnon Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ filius pientissimus.

Inimico carens vixit et omnibus ploratus cecidit. Lenta ætate cun-  
sumpsit et tandem, die dativitatæ Domini Jesu Christi. Lubens animam  
Deo resignavit. Vixit annos 77, obiit anno 1699. — mors sola fatetur.

Quantula sint hominum corpusecula, Jun., Sat. 10.

Here lyeth interred the body of Bridget, widow of Charles Kellond, of  
Painsford, in this county, Esq., daughter of Ric. Coffin, of Portledge,  
Esq., by Anne, his wife, ye daughter of Edmond Prideaux, of Padstow,  
in ye county of Cornwall, Esq., who departed this life ye 14th day of  
March, in ye 21 yeare of her age, and in ye yeare of our Redemption  
1696-7, leaving behind her Anne, her only child.

Memoriæ sacrum Johannis Coffin de Portledge Armigori, qui cum  
Galliam, Helvetiam et Italiam peregratus, et aulas suba udiæ Ducis,  
Regisque Christianissimi magnificas, necnon Romam ipsam aulamque  
Pontificis Romani splendidiorem vidisset, plenus virtutibus rarisque  
animi dotibus ornatus, innatale solum se recipiebat, proximis cognatis  
non majus solatium, quam patriæ et decus et desiderium.

Habuit in conjugio Catharinam filiam Johannis Kellond de Painsford  
armigeri, mortalitatem exiit, cheu quam inopinate et sine prole undecimo  
die Julie, anno ætatis 25, salutis 1703.

Here lyeth interred ye body of Anne, ye relict of Ric. Coffin, of  
Portledge, Esq., the dau. of Edmond Prideaux, of Padstow, in ye  
counte of Cornwall, Esq., who had issue Bridget, John, Honour, and  
Richard.

She was the melancholy survivor of her two elder children, and left  
behind her two younger to bewail her loss and to imitate her virtues.

She exchanged this life for a better the 16th day of August, in ye 60th  
year of her age, and in ye year of our Lord 1705.



## COFFIN MARRIAGES FROM REGISTERS.

1589. Mr. Ric. Coffin and Mrs. Eliz. Loyves were wedded June 10.  
 „ Mr John Woolacomb and Mrs. Mare Coffin, dawter of Mr. John Coffyn, were wedded Oct. 23.
1596. Lancelot Ffarington, gen., and Mrs. Wilmot Addington, widowe, were wedded Feb. 7.  
 (She was the dau. of John Coffin and Mary Cary.)
1607. John Moore (? Esq.,) and Mary Coffin, dau. of Ric. Coffin, Esq., were wedded March 3.  
 (He was the son of Humphrey, who wasted his estate.)
1609. Hugh Leveales, gen., and Ebbotte Coffin, d. of Rich., Esq., Jan. 3.  
 (For ped. see Corn. Herald Vis., 1620, p. 126. He was s. and h. of Arthur Levelis, of Trewoof, and Anne, his wife, d. of Thos. Herle, Esq. His sister Zenobia married Scipio Ackland, of Chappel, in Winklegh.)
1613. Ric. Pyne, gent., and Marg. Cock (?), widowe, March 3.
1616. John Coffyn, s. and h. of Ric. Coffyn, Esquyer, and Mrs. Eliz. Hardinge (? Hurdinge), were wedded July 10.
1617. Ffrancis Weekes, gen., and Mrs. Wilmot Coffyn, April 16.
1623. Mr. Hugh Fortescue and Mrs. Eliz. Coffin weare marryed March 31.  
 (Who was this Hugh Fortescue?)
1628. Hugh Prust, gent., and Mrs. Eliz. Coffin, wid., Oct. 27.
1633. Mr. Wm. Hocking and Mrs. Kath. Coffin, Jan. 5.

## COFFIN BAPTISMS FROM PAR. REG.

- |       |  |          |
|-------|--|----------|
| 1569. | Wylmota Coffyn, dawter of John Coffin, Esq., | Dec 6.   |
| 1573. | Prudence, d of „ „                           | June 2.  |
| 1574. | Ric., s „ „ „                                | Feb 12.  |
| 1576. | John, s „ „ „                                | June 25. |
| 1592. | Mary, dawghter of Ric. Coffyn,               | May 16.  |
| „     | John, s „ „                                  | Feb 27.  |
| 1603. | Humph., s of John C., Esq.,                  | May 22.  |
| 1605. | —, d of „ gen.,                              | June 30. |
| 1607. | Wm., s of Ric. C., Esq.,                     | May 17.  |
| 1608. | Ed., s of „ „                                | June 15. |
| 1618. | Jane, d of John C., Esq.,                    | Sep. 30. |
| 1619. | (?) Eliz, d „ „                              | Dec.     |
| 1621. | Gartred, „ „                                 | Aug 12.  |
| 1654. | Kath., d of Ric. C., Esq.,                   | Nov 12.  |
| 1655. | Eliz., d „ „                                 | March 2. |
| 1657. | Jane, d „ „                                  | June 29. |
| 1658. | Mary, d „ „                                  | May 13.  |
| 1659. | Ric., sonne and heyre,                       | Dec 7.   |
| 1660. | Garthred, d of Rich Coffin, Esq              | Feb. 19. |
| 1662. | Ann, d of „ „                                | Sep 18.  |
| 1664. | Ann, the second dau „ „                      | Jan 24.  |

## COFFIN BURIALS.

1555.	Richard Coffyn, Esquyre,	Dec 25.
1569.	Wyllmote ,, vidua,	June 13.
1571.	Johan Coffyn, filia John Coffyn,	Sep 20.
1591.	Mr. Wm. Addington,	Jan 6.
1608.	John C., Esq.,	March 30.
1617.	Ric. Coffyn, Esquyer,	July 30.
1622.	John ,, "	July.
1654.	Mrs. Eliz., d of Ric. C., Esq.,	April 13.
1660.	Ric., ye sonne and heare of Ric. C., Esq.,	June 12.
1662.	Ann, the dau. "	Dec 26.
1663.	James Coffin, gent.,	Sep 3.
1665-6.	Mistress Dorothy Coffin, wife Ric. C.,	Mar 6.
—	Mistress Eliz., dau. "	Mar 30.

Note B. Prince, p. 227—

" Of which name is the present heir and possessor of this ancient seat Portledge, a right worthy and worshipful gentleman of great piety and virtue; and for his quality, of excellent learning, especially in venerable antiquity, which hath been much his delight and study. He hath a noble library, and knows well how to make use of it. He was High Sheriff of Devon 2 James II., 1686.

" They have matched in Chudleigh, Cary, and with divers heirs—Cockementon, Hathey, Hingeston, &c.

## THE CHURCH.

The church is dedicated to St. Andrew.

The chancel, 10 feet wide, with a chapel in continuation of the south aisle, and with vestry on north side, having a priest's room over. Nave 66 feet by 15 feet, south aisle, with chapel, 66 feet by 14 feet, south porch, and west tower with four bells.

The nave is divided from south aisle by six granite monolith clustered pillars, about 12 feet high, with shallow arches. A north chapel opened to the nave and filled with rising seats.

The interior is well cared for, old carved oak benches occupy the centre, one of which has on a shield, R. C., 1580, another a shield with three bird bolts (Risdon.)

The pulpit is large, and formed of carved oak; it is against the south wall of the aisle, having in front the north chapel, and on the panels are shields charged with arms.

At the east end of the aisle is a large and elaborate squire's pew, raised three feet above the other seats, with a good deal of carved work.

Behind the communion table against the wall is a carved screen, evidently formed of old bench ends.

The church is roofed with oak shingle.

The outline of the circular stair at the south-west corner of the vestry leading to the priest's chamber yet remains.

The nave arcade is continued through without any break for chancel arch.

The east window of the north chapel has been built up, but remains of the tracery still exist on the outside.